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Edward F. G. Whitt

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

*A LEGENDARY ROMANCE
OF CHIVALRY*

BY

AGNES R. MATTHEWS

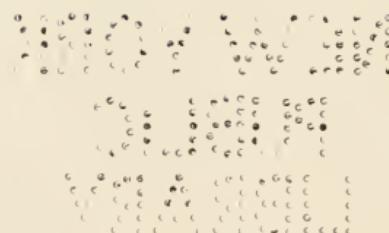
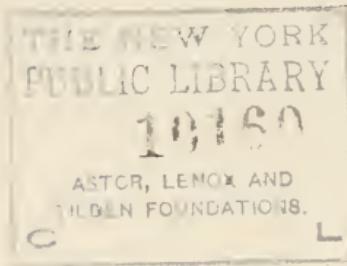


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TO
OUR GIRLS AND BOYS
KNIGHTS AND LADIES OF THE TIME TO COME
I GIVE THIS BOOK OF TALES

" Fortune, time, and fame agree in this,
That honor's gain the greatest glory is."



A WORD ABOUT THE BOOK

The adventures of the Seven Champions of Christendom are world stories, but this version of them is founded upon an old English romance that appeared in Shakespeare's time. If it pleases as did "The Famous Historie of the Seaven Champions of Christendom," I shall be gratified; but my purpose in offering it has been to teach a lesson as well as to entertain.

It is my belief that a serious defect in modern education is exposed by the prevalent lack of that sense of obligation which was the great motive principle of knighthood. As the world has grown away from the ideals of chivalry and learned to call them quixotic, it has become self-seeking, and the conviction seems to be strong with us, as it was with the robber barons, that might is right.

All thinking people to-day see our danger and the necessity of restoring the loftier ideals. We need brave knights to put down the misrule of our time, and faithful ladies stanchly to uphold them and gently to bind up their wounds of the spirit; but they will not be found at once in adequate numbers, for men and women, even if they recognize the need, find, most of them, that they have other pressing business. However, there are the children; and the impulsive chivalry that so often governs their actions seems to show us where our duty lies, and our hope.

If we are not, as a race, to become wholly sordid and ignoble, we must use every means in our power to cherish

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and to hold this fleeting spirit, made manifest in early childhood. The study of noble lives seems to me a sure means to this end, and I offer these romantic tales of knightly deeds in the hope that they may inspire in our girls and boys a wish to know more of the age of chivalry and of the brave and gentle men and women who freely gave themselves to establish right and justice in a lawless world. With knowledge may come desire to emulate deeds of valor or self-sacrifice, and as lofty ideals take possession of the mind they must elevate and ennable the character.

It is a long, slow, heartbreaking process, — this making dreams come true, — but work and patience and hope accomplish most things, so, perhaps, in time, a new knighthood may flower to save us from the giants of greed and the dragons of corruption that threaten our national life.

A. R. M.

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THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

INTRODUCTION

"Once upon a time"

Four little words — yet the charm they hold can never die, for they open the door into that dream world where golden-haired princesses dwell in enchanted palaces, attended by fairies ; where brave princes hunt in spacious forests ; where magicians live in strong towers, and giants in castles ; where dragons lurk in hidden caves.

But there is another door very near the door to fairyland that can be opened by the same magic words, and it opens into a world that was very real "once upon a time," though so like the dream world that you might sometimes believe them to be the same, when you read of princesses and fair ladies held captive in strong towers and enchanted castles, and of brave knights who rescue them in spite of necromancers, giants, and dragons. In fact, the stories of this real world of long ago are full of wonders. They may not be "every word true," but there is truth enough in them to make a bridge from the enchanted forests of the fairy tales to the gruesome battlefields of history. Such are the stories you can read in this book about the Christian knights and the golden days of chivalry.

In that far-off time, before the dawn of chivalry, Europe was a very different country from the Europe we know. The cities were few, and the vast forests were infested by robbers. Barons and great lords held their court in

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fortified castles that were surrounded by deep moats, which could be crossed only by means of drawbridges. Might was right and the victorious noble was all-powerful ; but in the midst of injustice and oppression it began to be the fashion to perform acts of service at the command of beauty or of love. This led men to protect and to revere women ; so there grew up the most beautiful form of manners that has ever been known, and chivalry became an institution of the countries represented here by the Seven Champions of Christendom.

The form of chivalry was martial, but its objects were both religious and social. It was the knights who made the crusades glorious and hastened the dawn of our own age, for they were free agents and, in the later development of knight-errantry, were the means of putting down the misrule of feudal times. Until the discipline of laws had trained the world to order, force was the only measure of power ; so the great principle of chivalry, the protection of the oppressed, made knights the champions of women, of the poor, and of the Church.

Absolute fidelity to a promise was a conspicuous knightly virtue, and no one could tourney who had not kept his oath in every particular. Honor was the quest of the true knight, so when he was not fighting in his country's wars, or errant in search of adventures, he fought amongst the chivalry of foreign princes.

Loyauté aux dames was the motto of chivalry, and the women of that day met with a respect and a romantic reverence under which their graceful qualities blossomed into beauty ; thus the influence of feminine gentleness and tenderness was, for the first time in history, fully experienced by men. Women held their proud position by the virtues

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that chivalry demanded of them, for men paid homage to their minds as well as to their beauty, and it was only on behalf of good and noble women that a knight was compelled to draw his sword.

Knighthood was a distinction of society before the days of Charlemagne, and William the Conqueror established it as part of the national constitution.

Unlike nobility, knighthood was a personal distinction ; but gentle birth was an essential requirement, while some wealth was necessary, for the simplest knight was obliged to maintain an esquire and other personal attendants.

There was one grade of chivalry higher than that of knight, the grade of the knight banneret, who had as much power as a feudal baron, and was subject only to the king. If a knight of proved quality had the means to maintain fifty knights and esquires, each attended by one or more men at arms, horse soldiers, and foot followers, he could apply to the marshal, on the field of battle, for leave to raise his banner. The herald announced his claims to the distinction ; then, if his request was granted, his knight's pennant was cut across the end, and he was thenceforth knight banneret.

The education of the Middle Ages was a very different affair from the education of to-day. A boy who was born into the feudal nobility had but one aim in life, to be a great knight, and his sister's destiny was to fill her place as chatelaine of a castle. Every feudal lord drew to his court the sons and daughters of the poorer gentry and the children of his equals, while his own children were brought up at the court of some other lord. The girls were taught needlework, the healing arts, riding and hunting, and religion, while some of them learned all that was then

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known of astronomy and mathematics, in which they excelled. The boys went through a fourteen years' course of preparation for knighthood.

At seven years of age the boys became pages at some castle, where they were taught graceful manners and the gentle arts by the lady mistress, and riding and the use of arms by the followers of the lord. The duty of a page was to serve his lord, and especially his lady, in the feudal hall, and to follow them in the hunt, or traveling in the forest, or when they visited other courts.

At fourteen years of age a boy was promoted to the rank of esquire, and his chief duty, now, was military attendance on his lord, although some personal attendance continued, for he was still "squire of dames."

At twenty-one, if his means admitted, the esquire was solemnly inaugurated with great pomp into the sacred order of knighthood. He took an oath to defend the Church, to attack the wicked, to respect the priesthood, to protect women and the poor, to preserve the country in a state of tranquillity, and to shed his blood to the last drop in behalf of his brothers-in-arms. Then he was attired with the greatest ceremony by persons of high degree. Golden spurs—the badge of knighthood—were fastened on him by his own lord. Great nobles and sometimes kings presented him with the pieces of his armor. Last of all, his sword was buckled on "his strong thigh," and his lord or sovereign gave him the accolade,—a slight blow on the neck with the flat of a sword, saying, "I dub thee knight in the name of God and the Saints." Finally, the priest exhorted him to go forth and fulfill his vow. The new-made knight was now ready to mount his gayly caparisoned horse and set out for some tournament where he might establish his prowess.

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At the time of the first adventures of the Seven Champions, about the date of the First Crusade, the knights wore chain mail. Their armor consisted of a coat called the hauberk, and a hood either attached to the hauberk or separate. Later, the corselet of plate armor for the protection of the front of the body was introduced, and the helmet with its visor took the place of the hood of mail. With either sort of armor a shield, a long lance, a falchion, and his golden spurs completed the knight's attire in action. When he was not in the field he wore over his armor a rich sleeveless cloak called the coat of arms. It was usually made of cloth of gold or of silver; sometimes it was red, or blue, or black, trimmed and lined with rich furs.

It was the custom to designate different knights by their coats of arms; as, the knight of the coat of gold (*or*), the knight of the coat of silver (*argent*), of red (*gules*), of blue (*azure*), or of black (*sable*). In battle their fine cloaks were laid aside, so each had the color of his cloak painted on his shield. After a time there were so many of these cloaks that further designation became necessary, and a distinctive picture was added to the plain color upon the shield. Thus it was possible to recognize a knight, in spite of the fact that he was otherwise completely disguised by his armor. This was often a great convenience, for the knights were constantly traveling in foreign lands or fighting in tournaments at foreign courts.

The horses at the time of the First Crusade were not armored, but they were gay with trappings, and a span-gled plume of feathers nodded over their heads. When not in battle they were covered with a rich cloth, called a caparison, although that word often signified the whole furniture of the horse, — saddle, bridle, trappings, and cloth.

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

War was the delight, as well as the occupation, of the world during the Middle Ages, for fame, fortune, and woman's love were the prizes. Consequently, exhibitions of skill in warfare were the diversion of courts. If a sovereign wished to hold a tournament on some great occasion like his marriage, he sent heralds to different courts to announce the time and place, and to invite all those who valued their knighthood to come to his court and prove their chivalry. The knights often came from a great distance, accompanied by their ladies and esquires, their men at arms, and their pages ; the gay cavalcade doubtless found great enjoyment in the journey.

These tournaments were very splendid affairs, outshining in magnificence the great games of our day. The avowed object of each knight was, usually, to prove his ladylove to be the fairest and best ; to show his choice, he wore her colors tied upon his lance, and her glove or a lock of her hair fastened in the crest of his helmet. The tilting grounds, or lists, were surrounded by the spectators' galleries, hung with rich, gay tapestries ; and the champions' tents were gorgeous with heraldic emblems.

When the knights in their shining armor, with their lances floating the silken streamers of their ladies' colors, pranced into the lists on their plumed steeds and drew up in opposing lines, ready for their sham battle, they must have made a fine show. Only worthy knights could enter the lists, for the rules of the tournament were definite and strict. "To break a lance" was the most significant phrase of a tilt, for the lance, or spear, was the weapon of attack ; while the points scored in this military game depended on how the lance was handled, and if it was broken, how and where. "Honor to the sons of the

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brave!" was the knight's call to action. *Loyauté aux dames!* was the cry of the spectators. Ladies were umpires, and they awarded the prizes through one of their number, who was called the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

Such was the real world of long ago, but it was so near to fairyland that the people believed in many things that have no place in a real world. They were sure of fairies, dragons and giants, enchantments and magic spells, so that they were duped by learned and clever men, called necromancers and magicians, who wickedly traded upon these simple beliefs to their own profit, and the downfall and destruction of many who trusted them.

Happily, we have not inherited the beliefs that made necromancy possible; but what we have of gentle manners, our moral courage, our sense of honor and of obligation, are our glorious inheritance from the valiant knights of chivalry and the brave and faithful ladies who lived in the wonderful world that was real "once upon a time,"—the world you are going to read about in "The Seven Champions of Christendom."

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

THE FIRST PART

Being an account of their battles by sea and land ; their tilts and tournaments for ladies ; their combats with giants, monsters, and dragons ; their adventures in foreign countries ; their enchantments in the Holy Land ; their prowess and chivalry in Europe, Africa, and Asia, with their victories against the enemies of Christ



I

ST. GEORGE AND THE ENCHANTRESS

In the days of chivalry there lived seven brave and noble knights who were the champions¹ of Christendom. St. George was champion for England, St. Denis for France, St. James for Spain, St. Anthony for Italy, St. Andrew for Scotland, St. Patrick for Ireland, and St. David for Wales.

St. George, the first Christian hero of England, was born in the city of Coventry. His father was lord high steward of England and his mother was daughter of the king of England. She dreamed that she had a child who was a dragon and would be the cause of her death. This dream so alarmed the lord high steward when he heard it that he resolved to find out its meaning; so he set out at once for the solitary abode of Kalyb, the Wise Lady of the Woods, attended by a single knight, who carried a white lamb under his arm.

After traveling two days they came to a place set round with dead and hollow trees, from which arose a din of croaking ravens, hissing serpents, and roaring monsters. Here was the lonely cave of Kalyb, shut by a strong iron gate, whereon hung a brazen horn for those to sound who wished to speak with the enchantress. They first offered the white lamb they had brought with them as a sacrifice before the iron gate, and then they blew the brazen horn. The sound

of it shook the gate, and they heard a voice out of the earth utter these words :

“ Sir knight, from where you came return.
You have a son most strangely born;
A valiant champion he will be,
Renowned for deeds of chivalry.
Begone! I now bid you adieu;
You ’ll find what I have told is true.”

This was thrice repeated, so the lord steward was obliged to go away, finally, without seeing the famous witch.

In the meantime the noble lady died and left her baby, whom she had named George, to the care of three nurses,—one to feed him, one to put him to sleep, and one to amuse him. That the baby was marked for a high destiny was plain, for on his breast was the picture of a dragon, on his right hand a blood-red cross, and on his left leg a golden garter.

Kalyb, the enchantress, stole the wonderful baby from his careless nurses, and when the lord steward arrived he was met by the sad tidings of the death of his lady and the loss of his son. He sent messengers everywhere to search for the child, and then he went himself, but in vain; so he soon died of grief and was buried in a monastery in Bohemia.

Kalyb kept George in her enchanted wood, where he was guarded and attended by twelve satyrs² for fourteen years. He was treated as her own son, and she grew to love him so much that, by degrees, she yielded to him some of her magic power. When at last he asked her his name and parentage, she answered, “ Thou art by birth son to the Lord Albert, high steward of England, and thy mother was daughter of the king.” Then, taking

him by the hand, she led him into a brazen castle, where she held captive six of the bravest knights in the world.

"These," said she, "are worthy champions of Christendom; the first is St. Denis of France, the second St. James of Spain, the third St. Anthony of Italy, the fourth St. Andrew of Scotland, the fifth St. Patrick of Ireland, the sixth St. David of Wales, and thou wert born to be the seventh, thy name being St. George of England, for so shalt thou be called in time to come." She took him by the hand again and led him into a fine, large room, where there stood seven of the most beautiful steeds that ever were seen.

"Six of these," said she, "belong to the six knights, and the seventh I will bestow upon thee. He is called Bucephalus, as was Alexander's great horse." She led him into another room, where there was the richest armor in the world. Choosing the finest hauberk from the armory, she put it on him and drew the hood over his head. From a secret place she brought out a huge falchion,³ which she fastened at his side, and then she flung over his shoulders a rich coat of arms.

"Now," said she, "you are invincible. You can never be conquered, for you have the strongest armor in the world, made of pure Lydian steel, and your sword is Ascalon,⁴ which was made by the Cyclops. It will cut the hardest flint, and it is magic, so that while you wear it no treason or witchcraft or violence can defeat you. Your steed has such power that while you are mounted upon him no knight in the world can conquer you."

As a final gift Kalyb put in his hand a silver wand that gave him power over the enchanted wood, in which they went for a walk. They passed by a mighty rock, which the knight struck at with his silver wand so that it opened;

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and there, before his eyes, lay a number of little children whom the witch had enchanted.

"St. George," said she, "if your eyes can endure to behold them, I will show you wonders surpassing those that are within the realm of dreams." With these words she stepped into the opening of the rock, expecting St. George to follow, but he struck it again with his magic wand and it closed, shutting in the famous enchantress, so that was the end of Kalyb, the Wise Lady of the Woods.

St. George now returned to the brazen castle and released from their captivity the six Christian champions, who were so rejoiced that they chose their deliverer to be their leader. Then the seven knights mounted their seven steeds and rode forth from the enchanted wood.

II

ST. GEORGE AND THE BURNING DRAGON

After the Seven Champions escaped from the enchantments of the Wise Lady of the Woods, they stayed awhile in the city of Coventry, where they erected a monument to St. George's mother.

When spring came they armed themselves like knights-errant and set out to seek foreign adventures. In thirty days' travel they came to a broad plain, on which there stood a brazen pillar where seven roads met. Here the knights took leave of one another and set out, each by a different route.

St. George of England traveled till he came to Egypt. There he met a poor hermit, whom he asked where he might find lodging for himself and stable room for his horse, Bucephalus.

"Sir Knight," said the hermit, "you must be an Englishman, for I see you bear the arms of England. But you are as far from finding rest here as you are from your own country, for a burning dragon is destroying us. Every day he devours a maiden. If he is balked of his prey, he sends a plague amongst us, from which our people die so fast that the living can scarcely bury the dead."

"This dragon has now destroyed all the maidens in the land, except the daughter of El-Mustafa, the caliph,⁵ and she is to be sent to-morrow morning as the final sacrifice.

The caliph has proclaimed throughout his realm that any knight who will meet this dragon and kill him shall marry the princess and inherit the crown."

St. George declared that he would risk his life to save the princess from this terrible dragon. The hermit, overjoyed at this, led the brave English knight into his cave and entertained him with such homely fare as he had.

Next morning at cockcrow St. George buckled on his armor, mounted his steed, and rode away to meet the burning dragon, while the good hermit stayed in his cave to pray for the success of the adventure.

On his way St. George met the caliph's daughter, a beautiful young girl dressed in pure white Arabian silk. She was going out to meet her death, followed by a number of sorrowing women. This sight only spurred the champion on to the adventure he had undertaken, so he knelt and kissed the princess's hand, vowing that he would rescue her or lose his life in the attempt. Then he begged the women who were with her to take her back to her father's palace to await the result of his encounter with the ravenous dragon.

St. George now entered the valley where the dragon lived. When the great beast caught sight of the champion, he crawled forth from his den, bellowing most horribly, but that bold knight was not a bit daunted. He only raised his spear and spurred his horse on the faster.

The dragon was fifty feet long, and his glittering scales were harder than any brass, so that St. George's spear was shivered into a thousand pieces, while the furious creature struck out so fiercely with his burning wings and his venomous tail that both the knight and his horse were more than once beaten down to the ground.

Finally, St. George drew his sword and began a most desperate fight. When he was almost overcome he happened to step into the shade of a magic orange tree, which the venomous beast dared not approach. The knight ate of this fruit, which so revived him that he attacked the dragon again. The dragon lifted up his wings as if he meant to fly away, when St. George, seeing a spot that was bare of scales, ran his sword Ascalon in up to the hilt, and so pierced that wicked heart. With a terrible noise the burning dragon of Egypt breathed his last breath and yielded his life to the conqueror. St. George smote off his head and set it on a piece of the broken spear; then he gave thanks to God and set out for El-Mustafa's court.

The royal champion expected to be greeted by the ringing of bells and other signs of joy because he had freed the country from a destroying monster, but, instead, he now saw armed men marching toward him with their swords drawn.

Almidor, king of Morocco, wanted to marry Sabra, the caliph's daughter, and as he was jealous of the champion, he had hired twelve men at arms to surprise St. George and make away with him before he came to the court with his trophy. Happily, this act of treachery did not succeed, for St. George soon overcame the men at arms and went his way. The king of Morocco, who had looked on at the fight from the top of a hill near by, now ran as fast as he could, to be first at court with the news.

El-Mustafa rejoiced greatly when he heard that the burning dragon was dead, so he commanded the people to ring bells and make bonfires to welcome the brave knight who had killed their enemy. He ordered every street of the city of Memphis to be hung with rich arras and embroidered

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tapestries, and he provided a chariot of massive gold, whose wheels and other timberwork were of the finest ebony; while the covering was rich silk embossed with gold. This was followed by a hundred of the noblest pashas and viziers⁶ of Egypt, who went out to meet the champion, attired in crimson velvet and mounted on richly caparisoned, milk-white coursers.

St. George was conducted into the city with great pomp, while all the softest and sweetest instruments of music went before and followed after the chariot in which he was drawn to the court. There he surrendered the trophies of his conquest into the hands of Sabra, who took him to a rich pavilion, where she disarmed him and anointed his wounds with precious salves. Then she led him out to enjoy a rich banquet with the king, who asked him his country, his parentage, and his name. After the banquet the caliph invested him with the honor of knighthood and put upon his feet a pair of golden spurs.

The princess Sabra took part in these festivities, and she fell deeply in love with the champion. It was the custom of the court to present rich gifts to persons of rank and quality, so Sabra presented St. George with a diamond of great value, which he wore on his finger, set in a ring of pure gold.

The king of Morocco, envying the happiness of the champion, tried a second time to kill him. He put some poison into a cup of Greek wine and presented it to St. George, in token of love; but no sooner had the knight taken the cup in his hand than the diamond on his finger turned pale and three drops of blood fell from his nose.

St. George refused to drink, and the princess cried out, "Treason! treason!" But the caliph of Egypt, her father,

would believe nothing against the king of Morocco because he loved and trusted him. The wicked Almidor, whose heart was as black as his face, now told El-Mustafa that St. George was a Christian and an enemy to their religion, and that he was trying to persuade Sabra to turn Christian. This so enraged the Egyptian that he forgot how the champion had saved Sabra's life and delivered the country from a venomous beast.

He swore that St. George should die a cruel death ; and he wrote a letter to the sultan of Persia, telling him to make away with the Christian knight, because he was an enemy to their religion. Then he gave St. George the letter and charged him to deliver it himself to the sultan, as it was a matter of great importance. The champion, thinking it an honor to go on the king's errand, went like a lamb to the slaughter, leaving behind him, as a pledge of his fidelity, his good steed and his trusty sword Ascalon.

St. George traveled day and night in lonely places where the only sounds of life were the croak of the night raven and the screeching of owls from within blasted trees, so when he came in sight of the sultan's palace it seemed to him as if he had come to paradise. The walls and towers of the palace were of the finest marble ; the windows, crystal, set in work of carved silver enameled with Oriental pearl ; the outer walls, the gates and pillars, were of brass, and the building glittered with gold. About the palace was a great river, over which was a bridge erected on arches adorned with images and carvings. Over the bridge were hung a hundred silver bells, so that no creature could pass into the palace without warning the sultan's guard. At the end of the bridge was a tower of alabaster, on the top of which stood an eagle of gold with eyes of gems so

brilliant that when the sun shone the entrance to the palace fairly blazed with their light.

As St. George approached the palace he met a solemn procession in honor of the prophet Mohammed, and being a Christian knight he tore down their ensigns and trampled them under his feet. The people rose in great numbers against him, but he fought so valiantly, for the honor of God and Christendom, that in one day he slew about five hundred Persians. They were obliged to ring the alarm bells and to fire their beacons,⁷ rousing the whole country, before they could take him.

They brought him captive before the sultan, who swore by the Prophet that the Christian knight should die the cruelest death that could be invented. St. George bravely told him that he could only do God's will, and then he handed him the letter he had brought from El-Mustafa, the caliph of Egypt. When the sultan read it he was more enraged than ever, and he commanded the guards to cast their prisoner into a dark dungeon, where he should not see the light of day until his execution.

After he had been there a month, some of the Persians let down into the dungeon two great lions that had not eaten anything for fourteen days. At the cry of the lions the hair of the prisoner's head grew stiff, on his brow were large drops of sweat, and in his soul such fire and rage that he broke his chains and tore the amber-colored tresses from his head. Wrapping these about his arms, he waited till the starved lions came running upon him with open jaws; then thrusting his arms into their throats, he choked them to death.

When the sultan heard this he was terrified, and said that he should keep St. George in the dungeon lest he

destroy the whole nation ; so the brave knight lived there for seven years on hard bread that was made of musty bran, and with nothing but stagnant water to drink.

In the meantime the caliph of Egypt forced his daughter Sabra to marry the king of Morocco, whom she hated as the enemy of her beloved St. George of England. Now Sabra resolved to be faithful to St. George, so she consulted a magician, who told her that if she would dip her chain of gold seven times for seven days in dragon's milk and in tiger's blood, and then wind it seven times about her neck, no one, so long as she wore it, could make her forget St. George. She did as the magician told her, and thus she kept her faith with the noble champion who had saved her from the burning dragon of Egypt.

Almidor presented Sabra with a wedding garment of the purest Median silk, embossed with pearls and glittering gold and perfumed with sweet-smelling powders. All her garments were beautiful and costly, and the wedding ceremonies were so stately and splendid that all Egypt marveled. The festivities were held for several days in the court at Cairo ; then they were removed to Tripoli, the chief city of Barbary, where Sabra was crowned queen of Morocco. At this coronation the conduits ran with Greek wines, the streets of Tripoli were gay with pageants, and great tilts and tournaments took place.

Now we will leave fair Sabra and the black king of Morocco ; and, while St. George lies in the dark dungeon, we will follow the adventures of the other champions who set out from the brazen pillar to fulfill their knightly vows.

III

ST. DENIS AND EGLANTINE ENCHANTED

St. Denis wandered into Thessaly, into a part of the country that was inhabited only by wild beasts, where he was so hungry that he fed upon herbs and fruit till the hairs of his head became like eagles' feathers and the nails of his fingers like birds' claws ; his drink was the dew of heaven, which he sipped from the flowers in the meadows ; his attire, the bay leaves and broad docks that grew in the woods ; his shoes were made from the bark of trees, and he traveled in them through many a thorny brake.

As he wandered about he came to a mulberry tree, and seeing some fruit on it, he began to eat. He had no sooner swallowed a few of the berries than he was changed into a hart. When he beheld himself in a spring near by he began to bewail his misfortune in this manner :

"O merciful Power of Heaven ! Look down with pity on my hapless, miserable state ; incline thine ears to listen to my woes ; I, who was late a man, am now a horned beast ; a soldier, once my country's champion, now a timidous deer, the prey of dogs ; my glittering armor changed into a hairy hide ; henceforth, instead of princely palaces, these shady woods must be my sole retreat."

While he was thus lamenting under the branches of the mulberry tree, he heard a faint cry, and as he stopped to listen, a voice from within the tree uttered these words :

ST. DENIS AND EGLANTINE ENCHANTED

" Cease to lament, thou famous man of France !
With gentle ears come listen to my moan ;
In former time it was my fatal chance
To be the proudest maid that e'er was known ;
By birth I was the daughter of a king,
Though now a breathless tree and senseless thing.

" My pride was such that Heaven confounded me,
A goddess in my own conceit I was :
What nature lent too base I thought to be,
But deem'd myself all others to surpass ;
And therefore nectar and ambrosia sweet,
The food of heaven, for me I counted meet.

" My pride despised the finest bread of wheat,
And purer food I daily sought to find ;
Refinèd gold was added to my meat,
Such self-conceit my better self did blind ;
For which the gods above transformèd me
From human creature to this mulberry tree.

" Seven years in shape of hart thou must remain,
And then the purple rose, by Heaven's decree,
Shall bring thee to thy former shape again,
And end at last thy woeful misery ;
When this is done, be sure you cut in twain
This fatal tree wherein I do remain."

At this the poor hart stood amazed and speechless with grief, thinking how long it would be before he could return to the society of men. Finding his voice, he cried out against his fate : " O wretched and miserable ! Here am I confined in this lonely spot, exposed to more hardships and dangers in the shape of a beast than I yet know of. I shall be scorched by the sun's beams in summer, and wet with showers ; while in winter I shall have snow for my covering and no food to eat. Alas, it was an evil day when I came to this place so cursed by strange enchantments."

Tears burst from his eyes and sighs from his breast as the poor hart dwelt upon his misfortune, for he still had the mind of a man ; and as he thought of the glorious days when he had fought for the honor of his country, it seemed to him that he could not endure his lot.

The Queen of Night was many hundred times a witness to his lamentations, while the wandering night owl that sat hooting in a tree above his head heard him count in the sand with his hoof the days of his enchantment. Still the poor champion found some comfort, when all other beasts slept, in the soft murmuring of the brooks and the sweet song of the nightingale, who with her mournful melody joined in the chorus of his sighs.

All this time his faithful horse never left him day or night, but grazed near by and brought boughs, which he plucked from the spreading trees with his teeth, to make a shelter for the helpless hart from the heat of summer and the pinching cold of winter. Indeed he tried in every way possible to protect his unfortunate master.

Seven summers and winters passed over the champion's head ; then one morning, as he was praying to Heaven for deliverance, he saw his horse, at some distance, clambering up a steep mountain that was covered with fragrant flowers. From amongst them he pulled a branch of purple roses and, holding them in his mouth, brought them to his master. St. Denis recalled what the voice from the mulberry tree had told him, so he greedily ate the roses ; then he lay down to sleep for twenty-four hours, while showers from heaven washed away his hairy coat and beastlike shape, so that when he woke he had once more the form of a man.

The champion thanked God for his deliverance and begged forgiveness that for seven years he had performed

no knightly deeds. He was greatly troubled because for so long a time he had done nothing to help ladies in distress or to rid the world of tyrants. Yet had he been able to leave the spot where he was enchanted, he might have fallen a prey to the hunters, as Actæon fell before his own dogs when he was transformed by the goddess Diana.

When St. Denis reflected on this he took heart and resolved now to do everything in his power to retrieve himself. Looking about for his armor, he saw it lying near by, stained and almost ruined. His hauberk was covered with rust; and when he pulled out his trusty falchion he found that it, too, was spotted with rust and in some places quite eaten away and spoiled.

The champion's once sleek and spirited steed was scarcely to be recognized after seven years' neglect. His mane, which had been platted curiously with artificial knots, was all tangled and matted; and his forehead, which had always been adorned with a plume of tawny feathers, was now hidden by a tangled forelock; while his once glossy coat was rough and dusty.

St. Denis groomed his horse until the jet-black coat shone again, and the mane lay soft and smooth as silk; then he cleaned and polished his armor, and when at last it glittered in the sun, he put it on. With all this he had not forgotten the mulberry tree; so drawing his sword he struck the roots such a blow that they split asunder, and there flashed out a mighty flame of fire that scorched the horse's mane and would have burned the knight himself but for his hauberk.

When the flame died there ascended from the hollow of the tree a maiden more beautiful than Daphne, whom the god Apollo turned into a bay tree. Her eyes were



bright as stars and deep as mountain lakes, her cheeks were like roses dipped in milk, her lips more lovely than Turkish rubies, her teeth like Indian pearls. Her curling locks were still the color of the mulberry, and she was dressed in a robe of green rushes intermixed with such a variety of flowers that she appeared like the goddess Flora. St. Denis, dazzled by her beauty, addressed her thus : " I know not whether thou art an angel, a fairy, or some earthly creature enchanted here, but thou art more beautiful than Aurora, and to thee I submit my affection. Therefore, I pray thee, unfold to me thy birth and thy name, that I may give thee in thy proper person my heart's devotion.

The maiden replied : " Sir Knight, I am the daughter of Thessaly's ruler, and I was called Proud Eglantine. It was for my pride that I was changed into this mulberry tree, where I have lived fourteen years. Now, for my deliverance, thou dost deserve my love above all the knights in the world, and I therefore plight thee my troth. Before this sacred promise shall be broken the sun shall cease to shine by day, the moon by night, and all the planets shall forsake their courses."

At these words St. Denis was filled with delight. " Fair princess," said he, " I pledge myself thy champion by the honor of my knighthood and the love I bear thee and my country." Then he mounted Eglantine behind him upon his gallant steed, and following the most traveled paths, they found their way out of the wilderness and reached at last the court of Thessaly.

The ruler, who did not know that his daughter had been enchanted, had long mourned her for dead, and when he beheld her, thinking it was her spirit that appeared to him, he fell into a swoon. Coming to his senses again he saw

that it was really his daughter who stood before him, so he embraced her fondly and offered her attendant knight the hospitality of his palace.

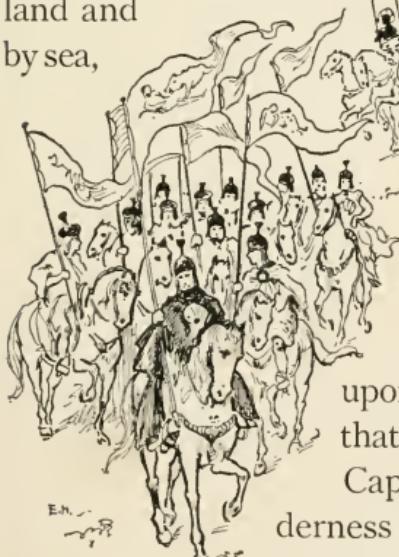
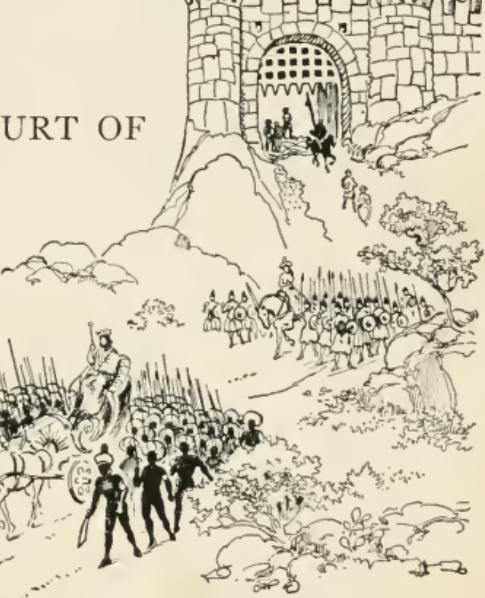
The lords and ladies of the court now welcomed their princess and her knight with joy, and listened in wonder and amazement to the tale of their enchantment and deliverance. When it was finished the fair Eglantine was conducted by the maidens of honor to a private chamber, where she was disrobed of her sylvan attire and clothed in rich garments of purple silk. St. Denis was disarmed and bathed in new milk and white wine ; then he was conducted to a sweet-smelling fire of juniper boughs, for the royal governor was a mirror of courtesy and a pattern of true nobility. Here, in the court of Thessaly, we will leave our champion of France, with his lady Eglantine, and see what adventures have been achieved by the other champions during the seven years since they parted at the brazen pillar, and set out, each by a different route.



IV

ST. JAMES AT THE COURT OF JERUSALEM

St. James traveled for seven years through many a strange country, by land and by sea,



and he had dangerous but wonderful adventures. He had a battle with the burning drake upon the Flaming Mount in Sicily, that lasted seven days and nights. In Cappadocia he traveled through a wilderness filled with monsters. Finally, he passed over the Red Sea, where his ship was so eaten by worms that it sank ; and while his mariners were drowned, he, with his horse and armor, was rescued and safely brought to land by sea nymphs and mermaids.

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At last he stood before the walls of Jerusalem, which was then the marvel of the world for princely palaces and splendid temples. He gazed with wonder upon her golden gates, glittering under the sun's rays, and upon her stately pinnacles that seemed to touch the clouds. He marveled at her towers of jasper, jet, and ebony, at her fortified walls built three double about the city, and at the glittering spires of the temple of Zion, which was built in the fashion of the Pyramids, its battlements covered with steel, and its walls shining with silver.

While the champion stood gazing, there was a blare of trumpets and a roll of drums near by, which so frightened his horse that the beast leaped up ten feet in the air. From the east gate of the city there came out a troop of horsemen, and, following them, twelve armed knights mounted on twelve warlike coursers, bearing in their hands twelve blood-red streamers wrought in silk with the picture of Adonis wounded by a boar. Then came the king, drawn in a chariot by Spanish mares and guarded by a hundred naked Moors with Turkish bows and darts. Next after them rode Celestine, the king's daughter, mounted on a tame unicorn. In her hand was a javelin of silver, and she was armed with a breastplate of gold wrought like the quills of a porcupine. Her guard was a hundred Amazons, clad in green silk. After them followed a number of squires and gentlemen on Barbary steeds and Arabian palfreys, and many people on foot.

All this so surprised St. James that he asked a shepherd who stood near by what it all meant. The shepherd told him that the king and all his nobles were going to hunt; and that the king's herald had proclaimed that whoever killed the first wild beast should have as reward a shield so

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richly engraven that it should be worth more than a thousand shekels of silver.

Away rode the Spanish champion and was in the forest before them all. By the time the king came he had killed the greatest boar that ever was seen, one that had lived long in a cave upon the flesh of people he had slain. This boar was terrible to behold. His monstrous head was ugly and deformed, his eyes sparkled like a fiery furnace, his tusks were sharper than spikes of steel, and his bristles harder than brass seven times melted. With staring eyes and open jaws this greedy monster assailed the champion, who hurled his double-edged ax down the beast's huge throat, and so made an end of him.

The king with his train now entered the forest, and when St. James presented him with the boar's head, he declared that this bold knight deserved the reward, but that first he must tell from what country he had come and what was his religion.

St. James said that he was a Spaniard by birth and a Christian by profession. When the king heard that he was angry.

"Bold Spaniard," said he, "did you never hear the law of our country, that any Christian who dares to cross our borders shall straightway be put to death? Yet you have done us a good service in destroying this wild boar, so I grant you a favor,—to choose how you will die."

The champion thought this was bad treatment for a good deed, but since it was the law and the king's pleasure that he should die, he made his choice, which was to be shot to death by the hands of a maiden.

Various maidens were sent for, but when they saw the brave knight bound fast to a tree, and thought of the good

he had done their country in killing the wild boar, they refused to shoot him. Then the king commanded them to draw lots, and the lot fell upon the king's own daughter, the fair princess Celestine.

When Celestine looked at the handsome young knight standing there to be shot, she cast the bow and arrows out of her hands, and falling on her knees before her father, she cried : "Great Sir, if pity ever moved you, behold the tears of your daughter, and grant that this worthy champion, this man whose fame is known through all the world, be not basely slain. How it will sound in the ears of all the nations when it is told that you have murdered a brave knight, who risked his life to free your country from a devouring beast !"

" Well," said the king, " since you have asked it, I will spare his life ; but he must be banished as an enemy to our religion, and he shall surely die if he returns."

On this the princess rose and unbound the prisoner. The noble knight kissed the fair hand of his deliverer and promised her his love and constancy. He told her that although he was now banished he would surely return and take her to his own country, so she slipped a diamond ring on his finger, and with tears in their eyes they parted.

The champion rode away some miles and then alighted to rest himself at the edge of the forest. He began to think that he had not conducted himself like a brave knight in meekly leaving the lovely princess, so he decided to go back to the court in disguise and to feign dumbness, that his speech might not betray him. He stained his body with the juice of some black berries from the trees, so that when he came back to the court, the king thought he was a noble Indian knight and received him into his service as a guard.

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The princess did not know him, but she saw that he was brave and strong, so she appointed him her champion.

Just at this time the Great Emir⁸ of Arabia and the caliph of Bagdad came to the court on a visit, and they both fell in love with the princess. They vied with each other in music and singing to win her favor, and they gave a masque.⁹ The great emir of Arabia was the leader, the caliph of Bagdad was second, and St. James, the dumb knight, was third. The masque took place as follows :

First entered the musicians. After them came the masquers in cloth of gold most curiously embroidered, and these danced about the hall. When they had finished, the great emir presented Celestine with a costly sword, whose pommel was adorned with a golden crown, while a silver glove hung from its hilt. Then the musicians played again and the masquers performed another dance, after which the caliph of Bagdad presented Celestine with a vesture of pure silk, the color of the rainbow, which was brought in by Diana, Venus, and Juno.

When the music sounded a third time St. James led the masquers' dance, and after it was over he presented Celestine with a garland of sweet flowers, which was brought in by the three Graces, who put it upon her head. Then, as if it were his gift, the dumb knight returned to Celestine the diamond ring she once gave him. By this she knew him for the Christian champion, so going presently to her room, she sent for him, and they arranged to make their escape that night. St. James shod his horse backwards ; by this means they escaped the fury of their pursuers and arrived safely in Seville, the Spanish city where St. James was born.

V

ST. ANTHONY AND THE GIANT BLANDERON

St. Anthony of Italy had already spent seven years in Thrace, when he came, one day in summer, to the top of a high mountain where there was a great castle. In this castle lived a giant who was so strong that no man in all Thrace dared to fight him. The giant's name was Blanderon. His castle was of the purest marble, with gates of brass, and over the principal gate were graven these verses :

Within this castle lives the scourge of kings,
A furious giant, whose unconquer'd power
A mighty monarch to subjection brings,
And keeps his daughters prisoners in his tower.
Seven damsels fair this monstrous giant keeps,
To sing him music while he nightly sleeps.

His bars of steel a thousand knights have felt,
Who for these virgins' sake have lost their lives.
For all the champions bold that with him dealt
This most inhuman giant still survives ;
Let simple passengers take heed in time
When up this mountain they intend to climb.

St. Anthony read this, but nevertheless he struck the castle gate with the pommel of his sword so that Blanderon came out, brandishing an oak tree as if it had been an ax. When he saw the Italian champion he cried : "What fury hath incensed thee to match thy feeble force

ST. ANTHONY AND THE GIANT BLANDERON

against the violence of my strong arm?" But for all his bragging, the clumsy Blanderon could not hit the nimble St. Anthony, and when the giant was finally overcome by his great efforts in the heat, the champion with a single stroke cut off his head.

By this time St. Anthony was glad to take his hauberk off and to lie down on the ground to cool himself. There he swooned in a chill, lying like one dead, until Rosalinde, a daughter of the Macedonian king, who was imprisoned in the castle, looked over the walls and saw him there beside the headless giant. She ran down and tried by every means in her power to revive him, and at last, when she was almost in despair, he came to life. Then she led him into the castle, where he rested for the night on a soft bed stuffed with turtledoves' feathers and thistledown.

In the morning Rosalinde took St. Anthony over the castle. She showed him the giant's bed made of carved brass and hung with curtains of gold, the leaden tower where hung the armor of a hundred knights the giant had slain, and the stable where stood their hundred horses. After this she led him to a broad pond of clear crystal water, whereon swam six milk-white swans with crowns of gold hanging about their necks.

"These," she said, "are my sisters; they were transformed, to keep them safe from the furious giant, who guarded me like a treasure because I could charm him to sleep with sweet music."

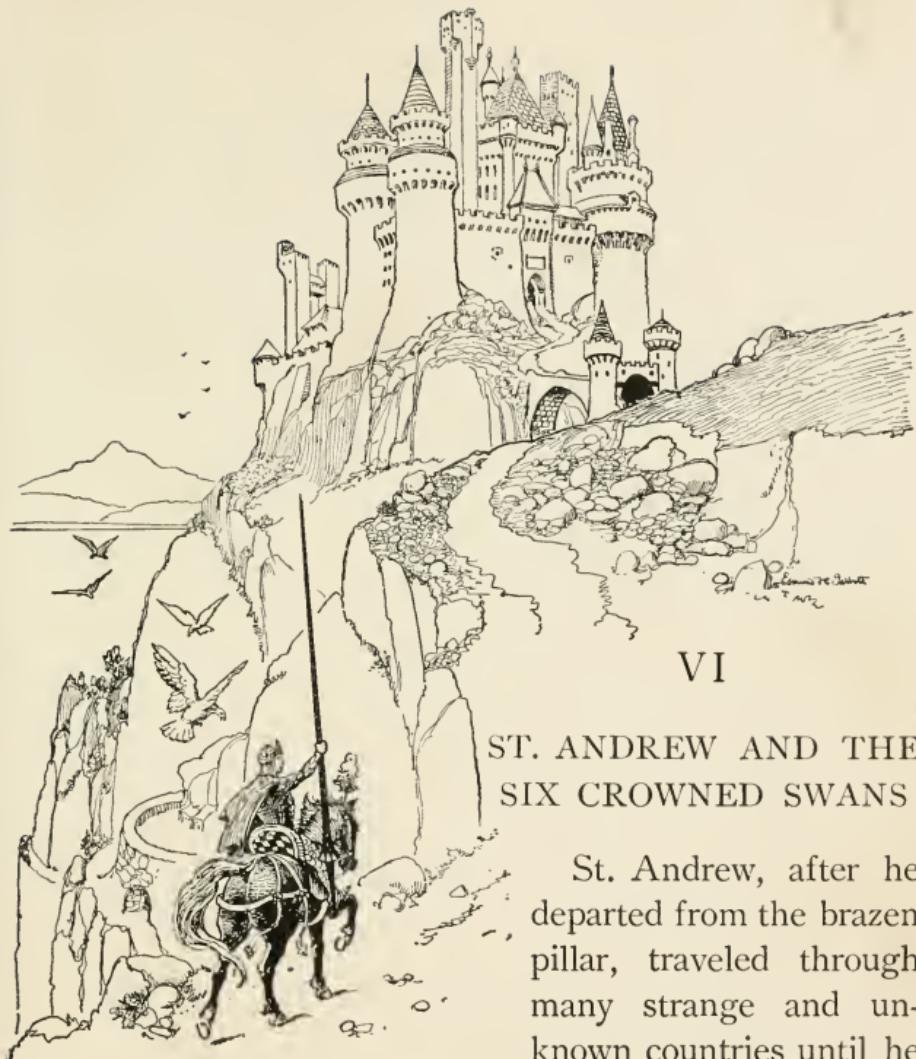
"In a hunt that we followed with the court we were separated from the rest of the party during a great storm. The giant Blanderon found us at the foot of this mountain, and taking us all up at once under his arms, he carried us into his castle, where we have been prisoners ever since."

The knight and the lady now locked the gates of the castle, and going down the steep mountain, they set out for Macedonia, which was about ten miles distant. When they finally reached the gates of the king's palace they heard seven bells tolling, and the porter said that they had tolled night and day since the king's daughters were lost.

"Then," said Rosalinde, "they can stop tolling, for we bring news of them."

When the king heard of his other daughters' enchantment, his joy at the return of Rosalinde was forgotten in mourning for them; and taking the castle keys from St. Anthony, he set out with the knights and ladies of his court, all clad in deepest black, for the giant's castle.

Rosalinde and St. Anthony remained at the Macedonian court, but after the champion had rested three days he was eager to set forth again in search of knightly adventures. Rosalinde would not be left behind, so she dressed herself like a page, in green sacerenet, with buskins of smooth kid skins and spurs of Lydian steel. She slung a bow and arrows at her side in an orange-colored scarf adorned with silken tassels; and then, mounted on her palfrey,¹⁰ she set out beside St. Anthony,—the loveliest page that ever a brave knight had for company.



VI

ST. ANDREW AND THE SIX CROWNED SWANS

St. Andrew, after he departed from the brazen pillar, traveled through many strange and unknown countries until he came to a land overspread by darkness, a land where the sun shone but half the year. The people who lived there were cannibals, and they had heads like dogs. The champion had some fierce encounters with them, but finally he was lost in the darkness and wandered about until he came to a vale of walking spirits.¹¹ He could see nothing, but he heard there the blowing of unseen fires, the boiling of furnaces, the rattling of armor, the trampling of horses, the jingling of chains, the lumbering of iron, and the groaning

and sighing of spirits. These horrid sounds so troubled him that he knelt down on the bare ground and begged God for mercy. Then he saw a flame of fire walking up and down before him, and he followed it until he came out of the vale into the region of sunlight.

The champion continued his travels until he reached Macedonia, where one day he came to the foot of the mountain on which was the castle of Blanderon. Unsheathing his sword, and taking a firm hold of his lance, he climbed the mountain, and there, on the top, he saw the mighty bones of the giant lying, for they had been picked clean by cormorants. Then he entered the castle, where he found the king of Macedonia with his courtiers mourning and making offerings to appease their heathen gods.

When the Scottish champion heard the sad story of the milk-white swans with the golden crowns hanging about their necks, he told the king that his pagan ceremonies were all in vain ; and he challenged the proudest pagans there to a contest of arms, in which he promised to maintain the Christians' God. His challenge was accepted by two Macedonian princes ; and a tilt was appointed which took place the morning following, in the meadow beside the river on which the swans were swimming.

Here St. Andrew won the victory for Christendom ; but the death of the strongest of all their princes so enraged the Macedonians that they set upon the champion, and it was only after he had killed numbers of them that the king forswore his gods and kissed the victor's sword.

This triumph of St. Andrew's ended the enchantment, and the six swans were changed again into the six fair princesses. The king swore to be a true Christian for the sake of the Scottish champion ; then he took him an

six princesses to a rich chamber, where the champion was disarmed, and his wounds were washed in white wine and new milk and rose water. After a dainty repast he was taken to his night's repose.

Next day they all departed from the castle with their banners streaming in the wind, marching triumphantly back to the Macedonian court to the sound of drums and trumpets and sweet music. They entered the palace full of joy, which was turned to sorrow when they heard of Rosalinde's flight.

Messengers were sent in every direction to search for the adventurous St. Anthony and the fair young princess. St. Andrew, thinking of the days that he had spent with the Italian champion, had a great longing to see him, and so he set forth the next night secretly to find him. The six princesses, full of gratitude to St. Andrew, would not be left behind, and when they found that he had gone they followed him. The king was filled with grief upon hearing of the departure of all his daughters, so he set out himself, dressed like a pilgrim, and alone, for he thought by this means he could come upon them most speedily.

When the courtiers found out, after the messengers had gone to find St. Anthony and Rosalinde, that the Scottish champion had set out upon the same quest, and that after him had followed the six princesses, and after them the king in pilgrim's weeds, they draped the gates of the palace in mourning and gave themselves up to grief.

VII

ST. PATRICK AND THE SIX PRINCESSES

St. Patrick, when he left the brazen pillar, followed a star that led him to fame, for the island of Rhodes, which became a stronghold of Christian knights, was recovered from the Turks by his prowess. After he left Rhodes he traveled through unknown countries until at last he came into a solitary wilderness inhabited only by satyrs and wild beasts. Here he wandered into a dismal thicket set round with mistletoe, wherein he heard some ladies shrieking, so that the woods rang with their pitiful cries. He stood amazed, but on looking about he saw a cruel sight. Thirty satyrs with clubs on their shoulders were dragging six fair ladies by the hair of their heads. St. Patrick set upon the satyrs so fiercely and laid about him so fearlessly with his sword that he soon put them to rout.

When the champion asked the ladies who they were, they said that they were the daughters of the Macedonian king, and had been for seven years kept in captivity by a giant, although mercifully changed into swans by the goddess Diana. They told him also how St. Anthony of Italy had slain the giant and freed their sister Rosalinde, whom he had carried to their father's court, and how their father and his knights, who came there to see them, had found them swimming in a pond in the shape of swans, with crowns of gold hanging about their necks, to show that they were the enchanted daughters of a king.

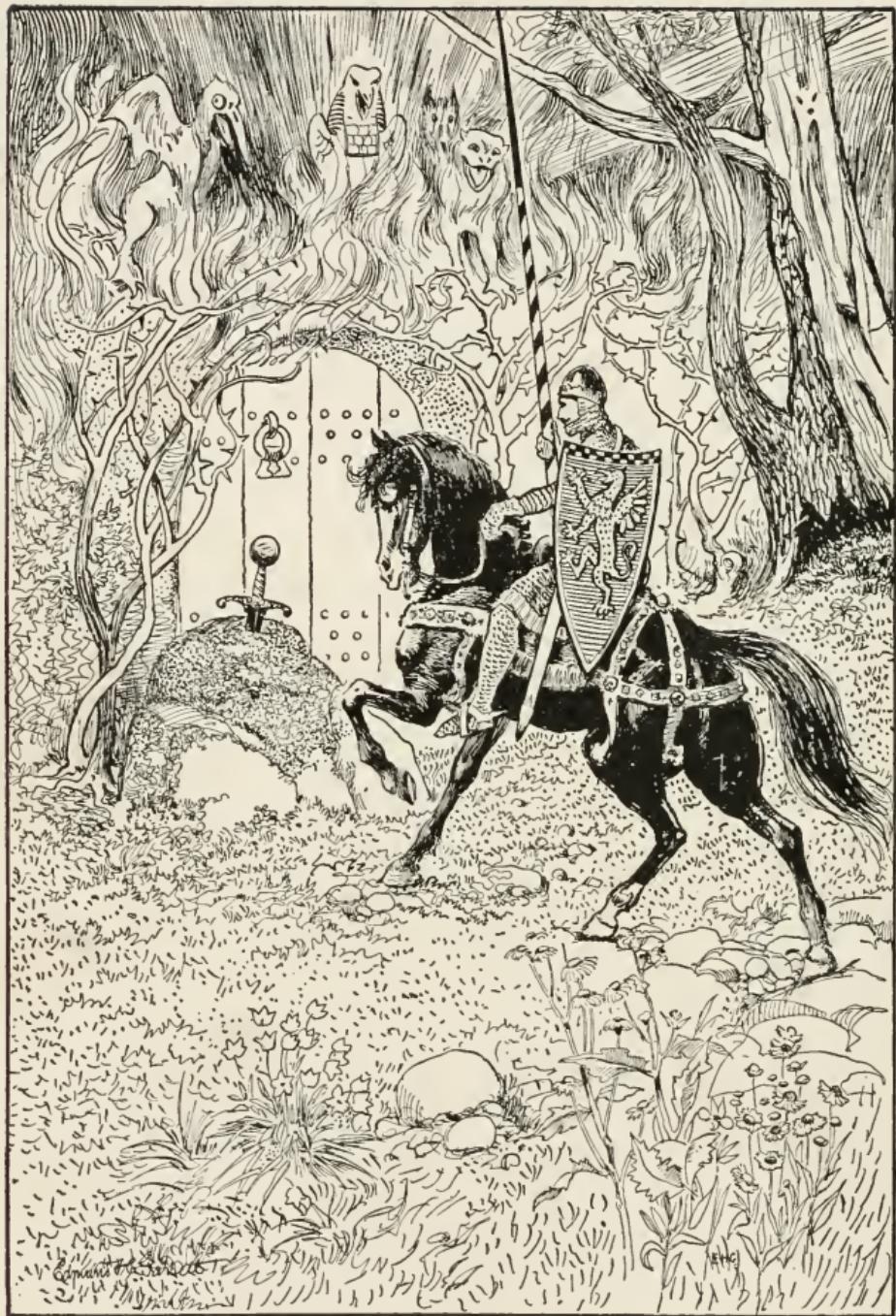
ST. PATRICK AND THE SIX PRINCESSES

"Our father's tears availed not," said they, "nor the pagan prayers of those who were with him, to free us from enchantment, until the Christian champion St. Andrew came by. When he saw the bones of the giant he ventured into the castle, where he found our father with all his knights weeping and wailing and praying to their pagan gods for our deliverance. He laughed them to scorn, but told them that if they would call upon the God of the Christians; their prayers would be answered.

"St. Andrew had no sooner said these words than our father commanded all his knights at arms to set upon him and kill him, but the gallant champion worsted them all. Then our father declared that he would forswear his gods, and we were shortly restored to our former shapes. But all our joy was turned to sorrow when we found that the champion of Italy, who had slain the giant and freed my sister, had stolen her away in our father's absence."

When St. Patrick heard this he said: "Fair princesses, these champions were my brothers-in-arms, whom I have not seen nor heard of these seven years, and I will gladly join you in your search, for I would travel more miles than there are trees in this vast wilderness to set eyes on them again."

So when they had refreshed themselves, and bound up the wounds they had received at the hands of the satyrs, with some healing herbs they found in the forest, St. Patrick and the six princesses set forth. After a few days' travel they came out upon the broad beaten path, where we will leave them journeying eastward, while we learn the fate of the champion of Wales.



VIII

ST. DAVID AND THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

St. David of Wales went to a wild country inhabited by Tatars, where he performed such gallant deeds of service that the khan appointed him his champion in chief.

The khan's birthday was celebrated by a great tournament, to which came knights and ladies from many far countries. St. David, as the khan's champion, entered the lists first. Upon his shield was a golden griffin rampant¹² in a field of blue ; and he was mounted upon a Morocco steed, whose rich caparison had been wrought by the curious work of Indian women. After him came the famous warrior Temuchin, the khan's only son and heir apparent, ushered in by twelve knights richly furnished with all the habiliments of honor.

They paced three times round the lists ; then the twelve knights went out, and the other two ran so fiercely at each other that they seemed to shake the ground. In the second turn Temuchin, who was ambitious to gain honor, nearly unseated the Welsh champion, but in the next encounter St. David threw his opponent, who fell with his horse to the ground.

The Tatar warrior was so bruised by his horse's falling on him that in a short time he died. This enraged the khan, and he would have killed the champion on the spot had he not already departed. Nevertheless, to kill him

would have meant loss of honor, because everybody knew that the fight had been a fair one and that Temuchin had lost his life through an accident. Nevertheless, this was the end of the tournament, and the khan, bound to be rid of St. David, sent him as his champion to the enchanted garden of Ormandine to bring back the head of the enchanter, promising that if he achieved this adventure, he should succeed him as khan of the Tatars.

This so greatly pleased the champion of Wales that he set out in three days, traveling westward till he came in sight of the garden, which was encompassed with a flaming hedge of withered thorns and briars that seemed to burn forever. Upon the top of it sat a number of strange misshapen creatures that, with harsh voices, foretold tragedies.

The garden seemed to be overspread with misty clouds whence continually shot flames of fire, as though the skies had been filled with blazing comets. This fearful spectacle struck such terror to the champion's heart that twice he was of a mind to return without performing the adventure; but he prayed God for courage, and then he went up to the garden gate, by which stood a rock of stone overspread with moss. In this rock was a great sword buried up to the hilt, which was of steel curiously chased and set with jasper and sapphire stones. The pommel was in the shape of a globe of the purest silver, and about it was engraved, in letters of gold:

My magic spells remain most firmly bound,
Till that a knight within the North be found
To pull this sword from out this rock of stone.
Then end my charms, my magic arts, and all;
For by that hand wise Ormandine must fall.

St. David thought of course he was the "Northern knight" who was destined to put an end to Ormandine and his garden, so he boldly put his hand on the hilt of the sword to pull it out from the magic rock. No sooner had he touched it, however, than he was overcome by a sudden and heavy sleep, so that he fell forward like one dead.

The necromancer knew by means of his magic art that a knight slept outside the gates, so he sent from the enchanted garden four spirits, who appeared in the form of beautiful damsels. They wrapped the sleeping champion in a sheet of fine Arabian silk and took him to a cave in the middle of the garden, where they laid him on a bed which was softer than down. There those beautiful ladies watched and sang, under the magic spells of Ormandine, while St. David slept for the space of seven years.

IX

THE COMING OF THE NORTHERN KNIGHT

The noble and valiant St. George, during seven years spent in a deep, gloomy dungeon, where he was almost famished, had grown very weary of life. One day, as he groped about in the dark, he came upon a rusty iron crowbar that had long been buried in the ground. It was dearer than a bar of gold to him, for he used it to dig for himself an underground passage which came up finally into the middle of the Persian's courtyard ; and thus, at last, he escaped from his miserable life in the dungeon.

It was about midnight. The moon shone brightly, and the starry heavens seemed filled with splendor to the poor knight's eyes, accustomed to darkness. Fortunately all the court was at rest ; but some grooms were in the stable, occupied in getting the sultan's horses ready to go hunting the next morning, so when St. George with his iron crowbar burst open the doors of the stable, he killed the grooms. He quickly saddled the sultan's own horse and armed himself with the sultan's armor and his sword ; then overpowering the royal guard, he took a coal and wrote over the door of the royal chamber the following words :

Sultan, farewell, for George is fled
While thou liest sleeping in thy bed.

He rode out then to one of the city gates, where he called in a loud voice : " Porter, open the gate, for St.

THE COMING OF THE NORTHERN KNIGHT

George has escaped from prison and killed the sultan's grooms. All the city is in pursuit of him."

The porter promptly opened the gate, and away rode the brave English knight. Next morning, by the sultan's command, all the country was in pursuit of the champion ; but he was already beyond the borders of Persia and in sight of Greece.

St. George, in Greece, found himself almost as badly off for food as he had been in the Persian dungeon.

"Oh, hunger ! hunger !" he cried. "If I were now the chief potentate of Asia, I would give diadems, scepter, and provinces for one piece of brown bread." In the midst of his complainings he looked up, to see, directly before his face, a tower standing upon a chalky cliff about three miles away. Rejoiced at the prospect of rest and food, he spurred his horse on, and in half an hour was before the wall, upon which stood a beautiful lady. After he had dismounted he begged her to give him "one meal's meat," as he was nearly famished.

The lady frowned and answered : "Sir Knight, I advise you to depart with all speed, for here you will get but a cold dinner. My lord, a mighty giant, believes in Mohammed ; and since you are a Christian knight he will not let you live."

"By my honor," cried St. George, "here will I dine or die !"

He had no sooner said these words than the giant came out of the castle with a bar of iron in his hand, looking more like a fiend than a man. He was five yards high ; his head bristled like a boar's ; he was hollow-eyed and wide-mouthed, and had lips like flaps of steel.

There was a fierce and cruel combat between the giant and the famished St. George. The weather was extremely

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

hot, and as the giant was fat, the sweat ran down his face so fast that he could not see to avoid the blows the champion gave him. Finally, he let his club fall, and St. George with one stroke of his sword split the great head open. The victorious knight went into the castle, where the lady gave him refreshment of food and wines. Afterwards he fed and groomed his horse, and leaving the tower in the keeping of the lady, he set out again on his journey.

The champion traveled through Greece into Phrygia, and at last came to the enchanted garden of Ormandine, wherein St. David of Wales had been sleeping for seven years. When St. George saw the enchanted sword, he took hold of it and pulled it out of the rock with the greatest ease. At sight of the glittering blade and the richness of the pommel, he thought he had a prize ; but he had no time to admire it, for darkness overspread the place, thunders rent the air, and the earth quaked so that the hills and mountains shook, rocks disappeared, and oak trees were split asunder.

The gates of the enchanted garden flew open, and Ormandine, the magician, came forth, trembling in every limb and with his hair wildly flying. He took St. George's hand and kissed it humbly ; then he led him to the cave where four maidens were singing beside the sleeping St. David. Seating the champion in an ebony chair, Ormandine began : " Thou art the knight from the North sent to end my enchantments. The sleeper thou seest here, wrapped in a sheet of silk and gold, is also a Christian champion whom I enchanted ; but he will soon be free, for my hour of destiny is at hand. Take heed now, thyself, how thou must do three things : take to wife a pure maid, erect a monument over thy father's grave, and continue to bear

arms for Christ and thy country. So shalt thou attain honor and dignity that shall redound to thee in all kingdoms of Christendom. This I know by means of mystic art."

When the necromancer had finished speaking, St. George asked to know something of his life.

Ormandine told him that he was once the king of Scythia, but from grief for the tragic death of his two beautiful daughters, he had left the world and wandered about until he came to this spot, which had seemed to him a veritable haunt of despair. "The ground," said he, "opened, and a fearful demon ascended, promising, in exchange for my fortune, to defend me from the fury of the whole world. Then he enchanted this sword in a stone so that, until it should be pulled out by a Christian knight from the North, I might live here exempt from all danger. This task you have now performed, and my hour of destiny is at hand."

No sooner had Ormandine ceased speaking than, with a great noise, the enchanted garden vanished. The champion of Wales awoke, and the necromancer gave a groan and died.

The two champions embraced, and then they related their adventures. St. David told how he was bound by the oath of knighthood to achieve the adventure of Ormandine, so St. George delivered up to him the enchanted sword, with which they presently severed the necromancer's head from his body.

Then St. David set out with his trophy for the court of Tatary, and St. George traveled on in search of other knightly adventures:

X

SABRA'S ESCAPE FROM THE BLACK KING

In the course of his travels St. George climbed a high mountain, from which he looked out over a wide country where, amidst lofty pine trees, he could see the towers of beautiful palaces ; and spread out before him was a princely city where he supposed the king of the country must hold his court. With the hope of achieving there some knightly deed of arms, the champion came down from the mountain and traveled toward the city. When he had gone two or three miles into the valley, he saw an old hermit sitting in the sun before his hermitage. In answer to the knight's questions the hermit said, " Most noble knight, this country is Barbary and the city before your eyes is Tripoli, where Almidor, the black king of Morocco, now ruler of all Barbary, holds his court."

" Grave father," said St. George, " through the treachery of that king I endured seven years' imprisonment in Persia. If I only had my good sword Ascalon, which I left at the Egyptian court in the care of my betrothed, Sabra, the caliph's daughter, I would be avenged on the wicked Almidor."

" Why," said the hermit, " Sabra has been queen of Barbary these seven years."

At this St. George cried, " As I am a Christian knight my eyes shall not close until I have a sight of this sweet

princess ; so, dear father, pray give me your hermit's habit for my steed and my armor and this box of costly jewels."

The exchange was soon made, and St. George set out for the palace in the garb of a palmer.¹³ When he reached the gates he found kneeling there a hundred palmers, who said they waited for alms which were given every afternoon by the good queen, in memory of St. George of England, to those who prayed for him before the gates.

St. George was overcome with joy at this proof of Sabra's constancy, and every minute seemed a year to him until, toward sunset, he saw her come to the palace gate. She was dressed in mourning garments, her hair had lost its golden brightness, and her eyes were dim with tears. As she gave her alms to the palmers, she came, last of all, to the champion. When she saw his face she bade him follow her into the palace, saying, "You are so like St. George of England, for whose sake I give these alms, that I shall do you royal honor, and replace your russet gaberdine with garments of purple silk, while for your hand, in place of that ebon staff, I have a princely sword."

Once inside the gates, St. George cast off his palmer's weeds and showed Sabra the ring which she had given him to plight their troth. The queen was so overcome with joy that at first she could not speak, but when they had renewed their vows of love, she told the champion how she had kept faith with him for seven years.

" I took the advice of a learned doctor," said she, " who bade me steep my chain of gold for seven days in tiger's blood and dragon's milk, and to wear it wound seven times around my neck, when neither wiles nor enchantments could ever cause me to forget St. George of England."

Sabra now took St. George to the royal stables, where stood his great steed Bucephalus that he had left in Egypt when as a young knight he had set out for Persia.

"Now is your chance," said she, "to rescue me from this monster I was forced to marry. He and his nobles have gone hunting, so mount Bucephalus, put on your trusty sword Ascalon, which I have kept for you, and take me away with all possible speed. I am now a queen, but I would rather be an English lady than the greatest empress in the world."

St. George, delighted at this, proposed that they should set out at once for England; so Sabra furnished herself with some needful treasure, and taking along a blackamoor who was her servant, she followed her English knight.

These three travelers lost their way in a great wilderness, where Sabra sat under a mighty oak tree to rest while St. George went in search of food. In his absence the blackamoor whiled the time away by telling Sabra many an ancient story,—a diversion that came to a sudden end, for two monstrous lions rushed out of the thicket and ate up the blackamoor and his horse; then they came like two lambs and laid their heads in Sabra's lap and went to sleep.

When St. George came back with a haunch of venison on the point of his sword, he was amazed at this sight, but dropping the venison he quickly killed both of the sleeping lions and tenderly embraced his lady, grateful that her life had been spared.

"Sabra," said he, "since the wild beasts have shown their faith in you, shall I do less? I am sure of your constancy, and as your champion at every court I shall maintain that you are the most faithful lady under the sun."

The knight had in his pocket a firelock, with which he struck fire and kindled sunburnt moss and dry wood that he gathered in the wilderness ; before this fire they roasted the venison, of which they partook most joyfully. Then they set out again upon their journey, and after sailing across the sea they arrived finally at the French court, where the nuptials of the king were being celebrated.

Heralds had been sent to every nation in Europe, Asia, and Africa to proclaim these nuptials, and the bravest knights of all the world were assembled there. St. Denis of France had come from Thessaly with the beautiful Eglantine ; St. James of Spain, from Seville, with his lovely Celestine ; St. Anthony of Italy, from Scythia, with his lady Rosalinde ; St. Andrew, St. Patrick, and St. David were there also, with the six Macedonian maidens who had been delivered from enchantment by the Scottish champion and rescued from the fury of satyrs by the brave champion St. Patrick of Ireland.

XI

A TOURNAMENT AT THE COURT OF FRANCE

The king of France was attended to the church by an honorable train of knights and ladies whose costly garments and glittering ornaments exceeded in splendor those of Hecuba, the beauteous queen of Troy ; later the nuptials were celebrated by banquets, masques, and courtly dances. After a few days there was proclaimed a tournament, to be held for seven days in honor of his marriage, and he appointed for his chief champions the seven Christian knights.

The king had a large frame of timberwork erected for the ladies of the court to stand on to see the tilters, and within the lists were pitched seven tents of seven different colors, where the Seven Champions might remain till the sound of the silver trumpets summoned them to appear. When everything was ready, with all the people in their places and the royal pair on their throne guarded by a hundred armed knights, the heralds proclaimed the tournament.

The first day St. Denis of France was champion, under the title of the Golden Knight. His tent was the color of the marigold, and on the top of it blazed an artificial sun that seemed to beautify the whole assembly. His horse, an iron-gray, was graced with a spangled plume of feathers ; and before him rode a page in purple silk, bearing on his

A TOURNAMENT AT THE COURT OF FRANCE

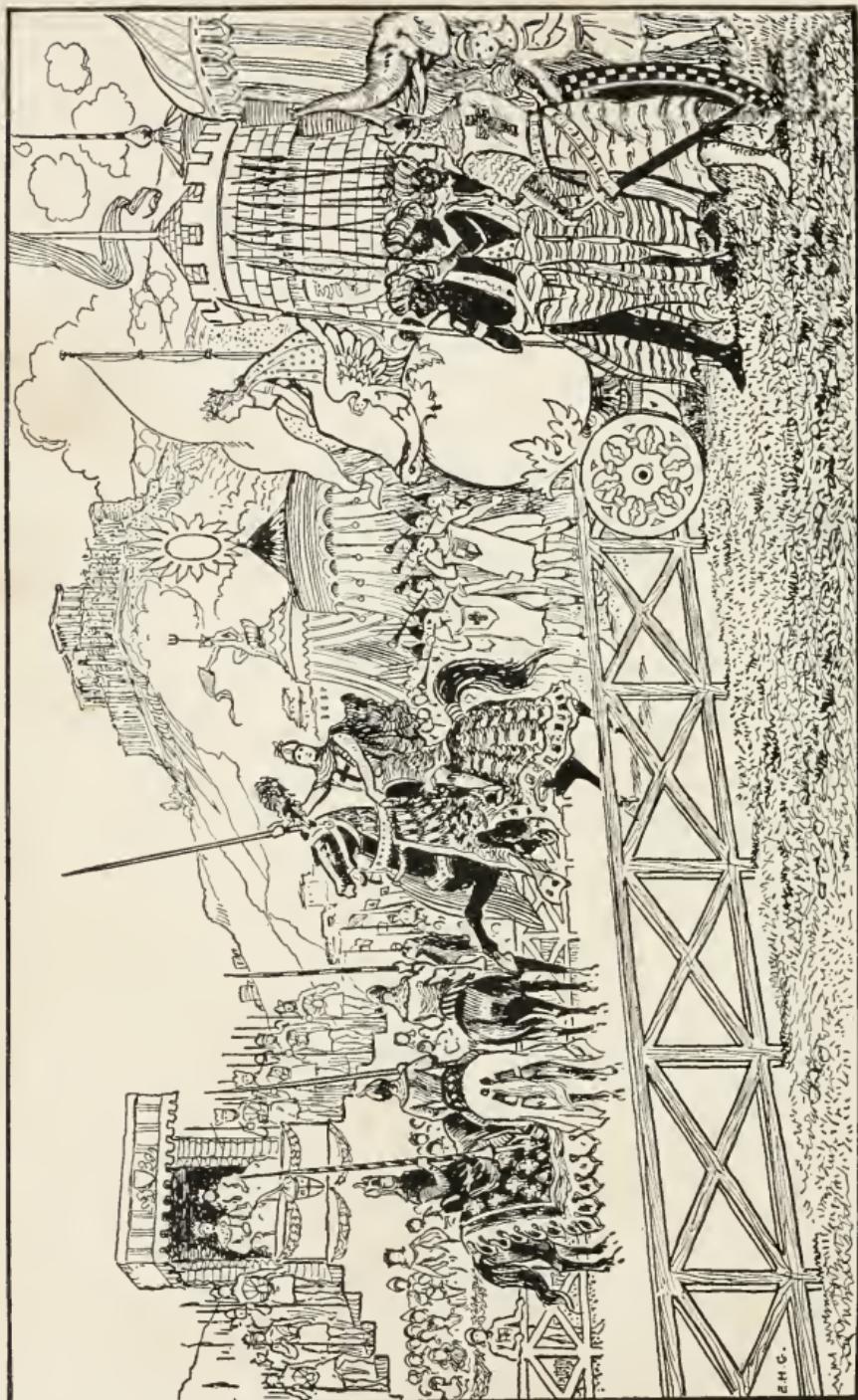
crest three golden flower-de-luces, which signified his arms. Thus royally did St. Denis enter the lists, and after he had pranced up and down two or three times in view of the assembled company, he made ready and vanquished every knight that ran against him, so that when darkness ended the day's jousting, the king applauded him as the bravest knight in the world.

The second day St. James of Spain was the champion. His tent, which was pitched close to the king's throne, was the color of quicksilver. In front of it stood four esquires bearing four escutcheons, whereon the four elements were painted. He was called the Silver Knight, and when he rode up the lists on his Spanish jennet, he won the day against all other knights.

The third day St. Anthony of Italy was chief challenger. His tent was the color of the sky, his steed richly caparisoned, and he was armed after the Barbarian manner. His shield was bound about with steel, and on it was painted the ancient arms of Rome, a golden eagle in a field of blue. He was called the Azure Knight, and he won the championship of that day against all the French knights.

The fourth day St. Andrew of Scotland was chief challenger. His tent was framed like a ship floating upon the waves of the sea, and set about with dolphins, tritons, and mermaids. On the top was a statue of Neptune, god of the sea, bearing in his hand a streamer on which was wrought, in crimson silk, a corner cross.¹⁴ He was called the Red Knight because his horse was covered with a blood-red veil, and he won such favor that the king threw him his silver glove.

On the fifth day St. Patrick of Ireland, as chief champion, entered the lists upon an Irish hobby¹⁰ covered with



A TOURNAMENT AT THE COURT OF FRANCE

a veil of green. He was attended by six sylvan knights, each one bearing on his shoulder a tree in bloom. His tent resembled a summer bower, and at the entrance stood an image of Flora, crowned with a wreath of sweet roses. He was called the Green Knight, and his prowess so daunted the defendants that, even before the tournament began they gave him the honors of the day.

On the sixth day the champion of Wales entered the lists upon a Tatarian courser covered with a black veil. His tent was pitched in the manner of a castle. Before it hung a golden shield whereon was portrayed a silver griffin rampant upon a golden helmet, which was the ancient arms of Britain. He conducted himself so valiantly that he won the king's favor, and he was applauded by the ladies as the most fortunate champion that ever entered the French court.

On the seventh day St. George of England, as chief challenger, entered the lists upon a sable-colored steed trapped with bars of burnished gold, whose forehead was adorned with a gorgeous plume of purple feathers from which hung glittering pendants of gold. The English knight's armor was of the purest Lydian steel. Before his breastplate, on a damask scarf, hung a silver tablet, whereon was pictured a lion rampant in a golden field, bearing three golden crowns upon his head. His hood was set with Indian pearls and jasper stones, and about it he had tied a wreath of maiden's hair. There, too, hung his lady's glove, which he wore to maintain her beauty and goodness above all others.

The champion's tent, supported by four elephants made of the purest brass, glittered against the sun as white as swan's feathers. Before it stood an ivory chariot guarded

by twelve coal-black negroes ; and here, upon a silver globe, sat Sabra to view her knight's encounters.

The beholders were amazed at the splendor of St. George's furnishings, but they were still more amazed at his valor when they saw him vanquish every knight that ran against him that day, from the sun's rising till the evening star appeared. In every encounter he tumbled his opponents, both horse and man, to the ground, so that in one day he conquered five hundred of the boldest knights of Asia and shivered a thousand lances. The astonished people thought this peerless knight must be the tamer of the seven-headed monster that climbed to Mount Olympus, threatening to pull Jupiter from his throne.

Thus the tournament came to an end, and the French king gave the champions a golden tree with seven branches, to be divided equally amongst them. When they were dividing it in St. George's pavilion, they discovered themselves to one another and vowed they thought this day of meeting the happiest of their lives.

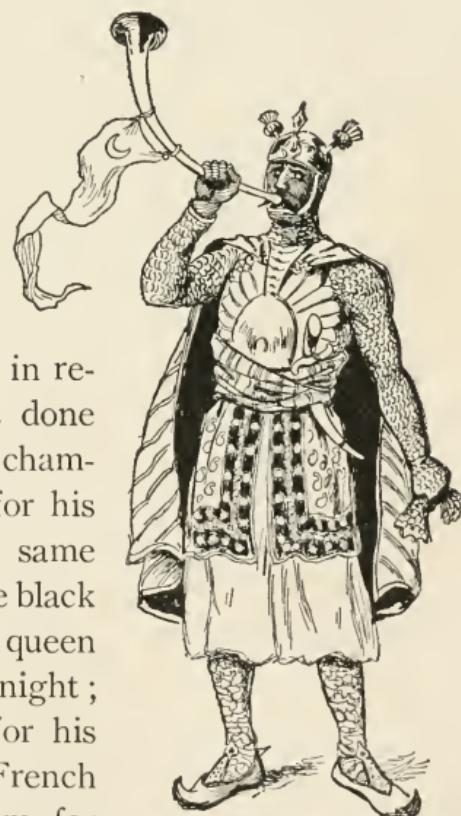
There followed days and nights of pleasure, and the champions were entertained and refreshed with music and dancing, masques, banquets, and all courtly pastimes, while their warlike spirit was charmed by the presence of fair ladies ; for the Macedonian princesses, with Eglantine and Celestine and Rosalinde, remained at the court, while many beautiful French ladies attended the queen ; but Sabra was mistress of the revels, and she graced the court with her loveliness, which surpassed that of all the others as the moon surpasses her attendant stars on a frosty night.

XII

THE PAGAN PRINCES PROCLAIM A WAR

In the midst of all this pleasure there arrived at the palace a hundred heralds of a hundred different provinces, who proclaimed defiance to all Christian kingdoms in these words :

"We, the rulers of Asia and Africa, proclaim ruin to the kingdoms of Christendom and to all nations where Christian knights are harbored ; the sultan of Persia, in revenge for the bloody deeds done in his palace by an English champion ; the caliph of Egypt, for his daughter taken away by the same English knight ; Almidor, the black king of Morocco, for his queen taken by the same English knight ; the governor of Thessaly, for his daughter taken away by a French knight ; the king of Jerusalem, for his daughter taken by a Spanish knight ; the Tatarian khan, for his son, the great Temuchin, slain by the champion of Wales ; the Macedonian king, for the grievous



loss of seven princesses, his daughters, now in keeping of seven Christian knights." To avenge these injuries, all kingdoms, declared the heralds, from the further parts of Prester John's dominions¹⁵ to the borders of the Red Sea, had set their hands and seals in agreement to wage this cruel war.

On hearing this proclamation the French king gave orders to St. Denis to muster all the strength of France to aid the cause of Christ; and the other Christian champions made a hasty departure from the splendid scene of their triumphs, to gather warlike forces in their own countries. Their ladies went with them, renouncing their pagan fathers, only to meet new dangers in the company of the knights they loved so dearly, and to run the chances of a dreadful war. But honor and the lives of all Christendom were at stake, so they resigned themselves gladly to their fate. After many days at sea the Christian knights and ladies came to the Bay of Portugal, where the champions vowed, by the honor of their knighthood, to meet again within six months, bringing great armies with them from their native lands, to war against the pagans.

XIII

THE ARMIES OF CHRISTENDOM ASSEMBLE

When the Seven Champions reported, in their native countries, that the pagans had declared a war against Christendom, and that all the potentates of Asia and Africa were mustering their forces for the invasion of Europe, there was the greatest excitement. Men forsook kindred and friends to join the Christian army; they mortgaged their lands and sold their patrimony to furnish themselves for the field; and in every city and town of Europe the streets were filled with the tramp of soldiers, the roll of drums, and the echoes of silver trumpets that sounded the call to arms. By springtime all was ready, and the champions with their armies set out from their several countries for the rendezvous in Portugal.

The first to arrive was St. George, with a hundred thousand soldiers. There were twenty thousand horsemen in sable armor, their lances bound with steel, who wore for colors the red cross¹⁶ supported by a golden lion. There were twenty thousand sturdy bowmen in red, with a red cross on their caps, their bows of the strongest yew, their arrows of ash with forked heads of steel, and their famous gray goose feathers bound on with green wax and twisted silk. The foot soldiers numbered ten thousand men, and the cavaliers ten thousand. To guard the waving ensigns, there were thirty thousand bills,¹⁷ all of them clad in glittering

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

armor. Likewise there followed ten thousand laboring pioneers, ready, if occasion required, to undermine any town or castle, to intrench forts, or to make roads.

The next to arrive was St. David of Wales with fifty thousand Britons, whose colors were a golden cross supported by a silver griffin. St. David rode a milk-white hobby, and he was guarded by a train of knights in purple. St. George welcomed him to the English tent, where they spent the night. On the next day St. David set up his own tent a quarter of a league distant.

St. Patrick of Ireland came next with an army of fifty thousand men. They were dressed in the skins of wild beasts, and they carried in their hands mighty darts tipped with steel. St. Patrick, like the Welsh champion, received the welcome of the soldiers and the hospitality of St. George.

The fourth to land was St. Andrew of Scotland with sixty thousand horsemen, bills, and foot soldiers. The horsemen were hardy fighters who wore, in place of coats of mail, only quilted jackets of leather ; they carried lances of the Turkish fashion, thick and short. The bills carried fearful weapons, and fought standing, while the rest of the soldiers were light-footed men, who could run and climb like stags.

Now came St. Anthony with eighty thousand cavalry mounted on war horses in stately trappings, each one attended by a negro bearing a streamer of silk with the arms of Italy wrought on it in gold.

St. Denis came next with eighty thousand men. After him marched twelve dukes, subjects of the French king, and each duke maintained two thousand soldiers in these wars.

The last to arrive was St. James of Spain with eighty thousand men, and ten tons of refined gold which he had

THE ARMIES OF CHRISTENDOM ASSEMBLE

brought from the Spanish mines to support the army in its defense of Christendom.

The Christian army, now assembled, numbered five hundred thousand men, and with one accord they chose St. George as their commander. When the mighty sound of their cheers died away, the English champion had them drawn up in battle array, and made a stirring oration :

" You men of Europe," said he, " and my countrymen, you have never feared the enemies of Christ. Be not discouraged by the hordes of pagans who threaten Christendom. I am your leader and never have I fought in vain. Let us go to victory with this battle cry, " For Christendom we fight, for Christendom we live and die."

He had no sooner finished this exhortation than the whole army with one voice cried, " To arms ! to arms, with victorious George of England ! "

Upon that the champions gave orders to raise the tents, and they set out at once on the march with their army, to meet and vanquish their pagan foes.

XIV

THE WAR IN HUNGARY AND IN BARBARY

The pagans, meantime, had raised an army of more than eight hundred thousand men. They came by long marches from fifty-two kingdoms to their rendezvous in Hungary,¹⁸ where they soon devoured the entire food of a fertile land. Indeed, this great army threatened all Europe with destruction, and they flattered themselves that they should return to their homes laden with the spoils taken from kings and princes. But God, who disposes where man proposes, prevented this, as you shall see.

When all the forces had arrived they appointed a day for choosing a general. But a spirit of strife arose, for each nation tried to win this honor for its king. Discontent and discord grew among the leaders, and confusion reigned among the soldiers, who were constantly fighting among themselves. It was impossible to bring any order out of this chaos, so the sultan of Persia, the caliph of Egypt, the kings of Jerusalem and Morocco, and the governor of Thessaly drew off their forces and returned to their own countries, repenting that they had ever come.

Those who stayed went on quarreling, and finally they fought a terrible battle amongst themselves. This lasted only three days, but great numbers of men were slain, fruitful valleys were laid waste, fields of ripe grain were consumed by fire, and towns and cities were destroyed as

if by an earthquake. In short, the pagans not only destroyed one another, but they spread such desolation in the kingdom of Hungary as was never known before or since. For many years after, that country was mostly inhabited by wild beasts.

Meantime the Seven Champions had entered Barbary with fire and sword, and when Almidor, the Black King of Morocco, returned from Hungary with his troops of Moors and negroes, they fell before the swords of the Christians like corn before the reapers' sickles. Almidor and St. George had a long and terrible fight, in which St. George was the victor. When the Moors saw their king taken prisoner, they would have fled, but the Christians, being lighter of foot, overtook them and made the greatest slaughter of them that ever was in all Barbary.

After the battle was ended the army marched to Tripoli, where the English champion made preparations for the death of his captive foe in the center of the market place.

The blackamoor king came to the place of his execution, guarded by a hundred Christian soldiers. After them with solemn pomp came the nobles of the kingdom, dressed in mourning robes, and they were followed by a hundred Morocco maidens in black, their hair bound up with silver wires and covered with veils of black silk, to show the sorrow of the country at the loss of their king.

Almidor was dressed in a shirt of fine Indian silk, his hands pinioned together with a chain of gold, and his face covered with a damask scarf. He was attended by twelve of his greatest nobles, clad in black gowns of taffeta. They carried before him the wheel of fortune, on which was the picture of a monarch boasting, with this motto on his breast, "I will be king in spite of fortune." On the top of

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

the wheel was the picture of a deposed potentate falling with his head downwards, this motto on his breast, "I have been king while it pleased fortune." This signified the fate of the king of Morocco.

The treacherous Almidor was at last in the power of the man whom he had so deeply wronged. It was he who had sent armed knights to kill St. George in Egypt. It was he who had plotted the champion's seven years' imprisonment in the Persian dungeon and robbed him of the beautiful Sabra. Naturally, the Black King did not look for mercy now; but when he was brought face to face with death, he was overcome with a cowardly terror and cried out: "Let my life be ransomed and thou shalt yearly receive ten tons of tried gold, five hundred webs of woven silk, one hundred ships of spices and fine sugar from Barbary merchants, and one hundred wagons laden with choice pearls and jasper stones shall be sent to thee in England. Likewise, I will deliver up my diadem, with all my princely dignities; and with the Morocco lords, bridled like horses, will draw thee daily, in a silver chariot, up and down the circled earth, till death ends the pilgrimage."

The champion refused to consider the ransom unless Almidor would renounce his false gods, and command that his kingdoms of Barbary and Morocco swear allegiance to Christianity, and that all his people be baptized in the Christian faith. This the king utterly refused to do, and when he knew that he must surely die the death that was prepared for him, he cried out in a loud voice, denouncing the Christians and their religion in these words:

"Great champion of Europe, by whose power Fortune sits in chains, I must yield to you my golden diadem and my royal scepter. But before I forsake my country's gods I

will endure a hundred deaths, and before I accept your faith the seas shall dry up and the earth shall vanish.

"Now, with this deadly curse I bid you all farewell. The plagues of Egypt light upon your kingdom, the curse of Cain upon your children, the famine of Jerusalem upon your friends, the misery of OEdipus upon yourselves!"

Then St. George gave the command, and the wicked life of the Black King was ended. To see this spectacle, the battlements of the temple were thronged with people, and there were some who at sight of Almidor's death flung themselves down to die with their king; but the greater number of pagans, as well as all the Christians, cried out, "Honor and victory follow St. George of England, for he hath redeemed Barbary from a miserable servitude!" This so delighted the Seven Champions that they caused the conduits to run with wine, bonfires to be built in the streets, and a sumptuous banquet to be proclaimed throughout the city.

The nobles now gave the king's jewels to the English champion, and placed the crown upon his head with solemn ceremonies. Then the six champions conducted him to the palace, where he took allegiance of the Barbary lords, who made oath to turn Christian and to be kind to all Christian strangers who came to live in their country or even to pass through it. St. George, rejoiced at his victory, established Christian laws, and commanded that the gospel of Christ be preached and that the people be baptized throughout the kingdom, for he considered it his chief duty under his knightly vow to advance the faith and to enlarge the bounds of Christendom.

When all Barbary had abjured the Crescent for the Cross the champions grew eager to lead their army on to new conquests, so St. George gave four of the greatest Morocco

nobles authority to rule for a time in his name, and they swore solemnly to be faithful to their trust. He left some of his forces in the cities of Tripoli and Morocco with the sick and wounded soldiers, while with the rest of the army he marched into Egypt to avenge the injury El-Mustafa had done him.

However, the army had no sooner gone than the Moors broke their oaths and resumed allegiance to their former gods. They overpowered the forces of the English champion, and in revenge for the death of Almidor they had the sick and wounded Christian soldiers, whom St. George had left to their care, dragged on sledges outside the city, where they were cruelly tortured and finally burned alive. Then all the other Christians in the kingdom were massacred in a most barbarous and inhuman manner by these pagans, who, false to their vows and cruel beyond belief, proved themselves worthy of the Black King they had served.

XV

THE CALIPH OF EGYPT SURRENDERS

The Christian army marched from Barbary, and before they passed into Egypt they passed peaceably through many countries of Africa, where the people freely opened their gates and received them as friends, giving them stores of provisions and whatever else they needed.

When they reached the borders of Egypt they saw no preparations for war, and as they marched through the land they found the villages deserted and the city gates wide open. The people,—peers of the realm as well as simple country folk,—terrified at the approach of the champions and their great army, had hidden their treasure in the caves of the earth, in deep wells, and in obscure places, while they themselves had fled into woods and wildernesses, where they hid in hollow trees, or dug caves in the ground to lie in.

The champions, who did not know that the people had fled, suspected the Egyptian of a stratagem to entrap their soldiers while they straggled about to gather up plunder; so St. George commanded that no one should stir out of the ranks upon pain of death, and that every man should have his arms ready for use in case of surprise. Thus they marched on, leaving heaps of gold and silver and other riches untouched in the cities they passed through, until, at last, they came in sight of El-Mustafa's splendid palace.

St. George, when he saw the glittering spires, was filled with anger to think of the indignities and the treachery he had suffered there as his reward for killing the fiery dragon of Egypt. He roused his soldiers by repeating the story of his wrongs, and he made a vow to destroy the palace, to burn it with fire, and to batter it with rams until it should fall, a heap of ruins.

Within a bowshot of the city they were stopping to prepare for an assault, when the gates flew open and the caliph of Egypt came out, dressed in deep mourning and attended by his viziers and pashas, who were also in mourning. They advanced with solemn tread. The picked soldiers of the kingdom followed after them, with broken swords and lances, and their shields hanging on their backs. After them came a thousand women and children, with cypress wreaths on their heads to denote their sorrow, and olive branches in their hands to show they came in peace.

This long procession approached the champions, who stood at the head of their army, and there the people all fell on their knees, lamenting and begging for mercy.

El-Mustafa spoke for himself and his people as follows: "Worthy knights, whose arms are always victorious, behold a potentate kneeling who never bowed before to mortal man, and pity him. I confess with shame that I have wronged this noble champion of England, who deserved better at my hands. Alas! I was persuaded to it by the Black King of Morocco, who filled my mind with fears and jealousies for our religion and the safety of my kingdom. Now I repent with tears that I ever listened to him, whose evil deeds deserve for him the punishment of Tantalus. Forgive what I have done, and the wealth of Egypt shall be yours. Moreover, we will forsake our gods and

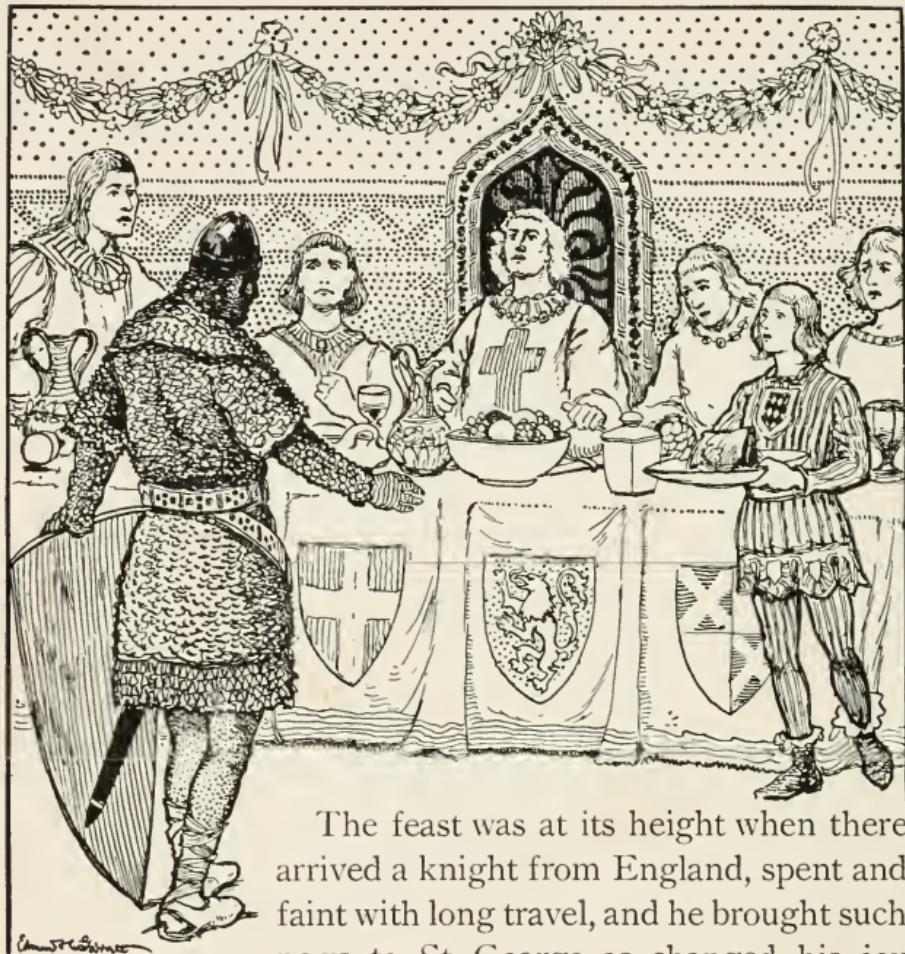
THE CALIPH OF EGYPT SURRENDERS

believe in the God whom you adore, for he is the true and living God. I beg this of you, St. George of England, in the name of your love for my daughter Sabra. So shall the blessings and mercies of your God forever unite your hearts and make you happy."

The noble English champion was so moved to pity by the proud caliph's submission and by his hoary hairs that he relented. Raising Sabra's father from his knees, he embraced him, and agreed to forgive him on condition that he and all his people fulfill their promise to forsake their gods, and that the caliphate be made a Christian kingdom.

El-Mustafa agreed to this, and in addition to his promises he entailed the rich kingdom of Egypt upon St. George and Sabra, to be theirs after his death. Thus the mourning of the land was changed to joy and mirth, the fugitives returned, and festivities everywhere expressed the satisfaction of the people. Bonfires were made in every town, the bells of Egypt rang day and night for a week, and everywhere there was feasting, music, and dancing.

A sumptuous banquet, furnished with every delicacy that land or sea could provide, was prepared for the Christian champions, in a hall which was built of cypress wood, and ceiled with adamant¹⁹ so that neither armor nor weapons could come into it without being drawn up to the roof. The servants who waited on the champions were clad in damask that was wrought with the purest silk, spun by Indian maidens, and at every course there was music by Egyptian ladies, who played on ivory lutes that sounded sweeter than Orpheus's silver harp. Indeed, nothing that could add to the splendor of this celebration was omitted, and the champions forgot the horrors of war in the midst of these pleasures,—pleasures that were not destined to endure, as you will see.



The feast was at its height when there arrived a knight from England, spent and faint with long travel, and he brought such news to St. George as changed his joy into the most extreme sorrow.

"Fair English champion," cried the worn and weary knight, "get swallow's wings and fly to England, for thy beloved lady is condemned to be burned at the stake for the death of the wicked Earl of Coventry, whom she killed to defend herself. She is now in prison, but the king has declared that if within twelve months a champion of her cause appears, he may win her release."

St. George and the Egyptian caliph were struck dumb by this news. They looked at each other as if they had lost their

wits. Then St. George cried out : "What wickedness could work such mischief ? She has committed no crime. Her soul is as bright as the undlooded sun, and her virtue nothing can blot or stain. Does ungrateful England thus dishonor me in the virtuous person of my dear lady ? Have I deserved no better of her king and people ? I have worn my armor in the parching heat of summer and the freezing cold of winter for the glory of England, and now she repays me by condemning the body of my spotless lady to be burned at the stake. I swear that if she be sacrificed before I come, I will never again draw my sword as England's champion."

St. George would have continued to vent his anger in words, but the knight begged him to start at once upon his journey, because, since he had already spent five months in finding the champion, he feared that any delay in their return might mean the loss of Sabra's life. However, the night was now far advanced, so they all departed to their chambers with dumb signs of sorrow, unable to speak a single word.

El-Mustafa withdrew to lament in solitude, where one moment he wished that his poor Sabra had never been born, another that some planet would fall upon his unhappy head. Overcome by grief, he lost his mind, threw himself headlong from the top of the tower, and broke his neck. In the morning he was found dead in the palace yard.

The Egyptians bore the body of their ruler to the chamber of St. George, whom they found arming himself to start for England. He was now successor to the throne by the vow of El-Mustafa and by the vote of the viziers and other members of the caliph's privy council, so his journey was delayed in order that he might be crowned king of Egypt.

Upon the third day the coronation took place, and it was celebrated with great pomp. St. George was dressed in the royal robes, — a suit of green and a mantle of flaming scarlet richly furred and wrought curiously with gold. The other six champions led him up to the throne and set him in a chair of ebony, which had pommels of silver and stood upon an alabaster elephant. There came three of the greatest viziers of Egypt and set a crown of gold upon his head ; then followed others with a scepter and a naked sword, to signify that he was chief governor of the realm and lord of all that appertained to the crown of Egypt. Then the trumpets, with many other instruments, began to sound, and the whole company with joyful voices cried together, " Long live St. George, true champion for England and king of Egypt ! " Finally, he was conducted to the royal palace, where he chose twelve Egyptian viziers to rule in his absence, charging them to inter the body of El-Mustafa in a sumptuous tomb befitting so royal a potentate. Then he commanded his brothers-in-arms, the six champions, to raise their tents, muster their soldiers, and march at once into Persia to avenge the injuries he had suffered there from the sultan.

The next morning at break of day St. George put on his armor, mounted his swift-footed steed, and bade his friends in Egypt farewell. Then, accompanied by the English knight who had brought him the news, he set out with all speed for England. As they rode along, he bade the knight, now that they were alone, tell him more fully about Sabra's misfortune. The knight gave a deep sigh and said : " I will tell you in your lady's own words, for I can never forget them. She bade me seek you out as her champion, and with tears raining from her eyes she told me this sad tale :

“ For some months after my lord’s departure I was entertained as befitted my station. But one evening as I walked with some ladies in a pleasant orchard, the Earl of Coventry saw me and determined that I should be his ; so he prepared a banquet, with music, masques, and dancing, for the entertainment of the ladies of Coventry. In the course of the evening he led me in a dance, and when it was ended he drew me aside into a deep window. Then he heaved a deep sigh and began to tell me what treasures and happiness should be mine if I would only consent to become his wife. I answered in some anger, saying : “ Is this, sir, the entertainment you designed for ladies,—to lay snares for them by inviting them to your house ? Do you not know that I am already married to one who has my whole love ? ”

“ He was going to reply, when some ladies came and asked us to make up a new set to dance. This gave me an opportunity to escape for the time, and so I excused myself from dancing by pretending a sudden illness. I went to my own apartment, much troubled at what I had discovered, and in future I shunned his company. I refused his letters and his rich presents, so he resolved on a desperate wooing.

“ It was known that in the cool of the evening I used to walk in my orchard, so he got over the high wall by means of a rope ladder and hid himself under a clump of rosebushes until I came. When I saw him I should have run away, but he so humbly begged me to hear what he had to say that finally I sat down to listen.

“ “ Fair Sabra,” he said, “ your wandering knight is by this time dead, or at least means never to return to you. Now, if you marry me, you will be mistress of all my large possessions. I will have you clad in silken robes

embroidered with Indian pearls and refined gold, and perfumed with sweet Syrian perfumes ; by day a hundred maidens shall attend your person ; by night a hundred slaves with their stringed instruments shall lull you to golden slumber ; but if you refuse, I will cut out your tongue and chop off both your hands."

" I begged him to kill me outright, but he would not, and so I asked an hour's time to consider the matter. He would not leave the orchard, but locked the door and then, coming back, sat down beside me. There I told him pleasant tales and sang him songs until he fell asleep. Then I drew his poniard most gently from its sheath and plunged it up to the hilt in his wicked heart.'

" This only did your lady tell me," said the knight ; " but I know that the earl's servants, when their master could not be found, came with torches and burst open the orchard door. When they found their master dead and Sabra beside him, they took her that night before the king, who kept his court in the city of Coventry. He gave her this sentence,— to be put in prison for twelve months and then to be burned at the stake. Yet, because she is a very noble lady, the king granted her the chance to be freed by a champion, if she could find one within that time to defend her life against the challenger.

" This is all the story up to the time that I left England, and your lady was then in prison. But I have been five months on my way to you ; therefore, great champion, hasten, for I fear that the twelve months will pass before you arrive, and that fair Sabra will die at the stake for want of a champion to defend her cause."

XVI

ST. GEORGE JOUSTS FOR SABRA'S LIFE

St. George needed no urging, for once on his way to England he made all possible haste by land and sea, and he was overjoyed when he beheld at last the chalky cliffs on the shores of his own country.

The day he landed was the day appointed for Sabra's execution. No champion had appeared to vindicate her, so she went calmly and bravely to meet the death a cruel king had ordained.

Through lines of guards and crowds of pitying people she was conducted from her prison to the place that was prepared for her execution. There this young and beautiful princess was stripped of her royal robes and bound to the stake with iron chains by the common executioner, while pitch and turpentine were piled about her. She seemed undaunted, and the thought of her suffering brought tears to all eyes but her own. Resolved to face death bravely, she lifted her hands and eyes to heaven, asking for strength and patience, and praying that when all was over God would receive her soul.

The king, who was seated on a scaffold under a canopy of purple embroidered with gold and pearls, commanded the herald to summon the challenger. At the sound of the trumpet he came riding in upon a roan-colored steed that was adorned with rich trappings of gold set with precious

stones of great price. This challenger was the Baron of Chester, who, the English people thought, was one of the boldest and hardiest knights in the world. Certainly he pranced up and down the lists as if he thought himself able to encounter a hundred knights.

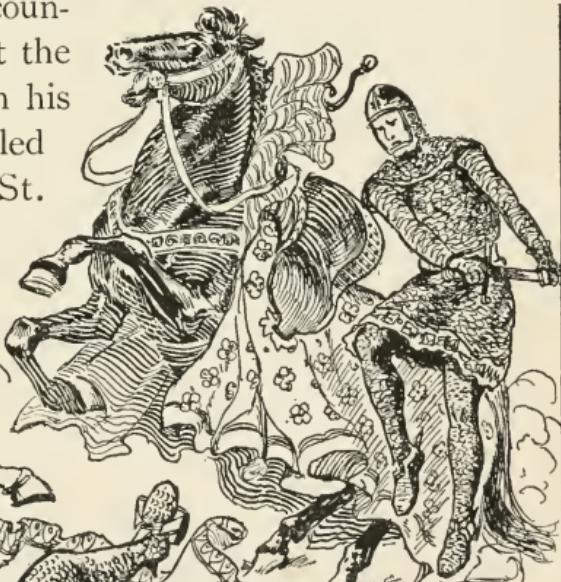
The king now commanded the herald to summon the knight who came to defend the prisoner. The drums and trumpets sounded three several times up and down the field. Between the calls there was a rest for fully a quarter of an hour, but when no defendant appeared, the king commanded the executioner to set the stake on fire. Sabra became pale as ashes and was seized with a great trembling, but she made supplication in these words : "Look down with pity, O bright celestial forms, upon my innocence ; and, inasmuch as what I did was from loyalty and in defense of my life, look down and pardon. Receive, Almighty Power, whose goodness has created me, a soul that is about to leave this dull earth and fly to thee. Or, if it is thy pleasure that I should continue here to praise thy glorious name, stir up the heart of some noble knight and inspire him with pity, strength, and courage to defend my cause against this base insulter who contends for my destruction."

At this instant was heard the sound of a shrill trumpet, which St. George's esquire blew, and the executioner stayed his hand. Then there was seen, afar off, a knight waving a banner of defiance, and, following him, another knight, armed and mounted upon a coal-black palfrey, with his lance standing in its rest. Now the guards and all the pitying people knew that Sabra's champion had come. They welcomed him with a great shout, and the roll of drums and the blare of trumpets signaled his entrance to the lists.

ST. GEORGE JOUSTS FOR SABRA'S LIFE

When St. George saw his lady chained to the stake he was overcome with horror, so that he nearly fell from his horse; but the knight rode up and made the formal challenge in behalf of his lord, demanding the lady's liberty or a fight to the death in her defense with whoever dared declare her guilty of a crime.

Trumpets sounded the alarm, and the two champions set spurs to their horses and ran together so fiercely that at the first encounter they shivered their lances up to their hands. The second encounter was so furious that the Baron of Chester with his horse fell down and rolled upon the ground. St. George, leaping from his saddle, drew his



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sword Ascalon, and as his opponent sprang up, falchion in hand, the champion struck him such a blow that he sank to the earth with a groan and gave up the ghost.

The whole company applauded the knight's victory and the release of the injured princess, and the king himself delivered Sabra to her champion, who clothed her with a scarlet mantle that was handed to him by a lady in waiting, and set her upon his own steed, which he led back to the castle, holding the bridle reins. So great was the joy throughout the city that the bells rang the whole day without ceasing. The citizens, in every street through which Sabra and her champion must pass, hung from their windows and on their walls cloths of gold and silver, and rich carpets, and laid cushions of green velvet in every window. The clergy, in copies of silk and gold, met them in solemn procession ; the ladies and beautiful damsels strewed with roses and other flowers every street they passed through ; and they crowned the champion with a wreath of green bays in honor of his triumphant victory and conquest.

Thus he went to the king's palace, unknown to all except as the champion, who they thought was come from some strange country. Sabra, pouring out her thanks to her deliverer, begged to know the name of him who had so bravely vanquished the boldest knight in England. Yet notwithstanding her persuasions, he kept himself undiscovered until the ladies who attended Sabra led them into a room richly hung with arras, where at last he threw back his hood.

When Sabra beheld the champion's face and knew that it was her dearly loved St. George who had saved her from a fearful death, she swooned with joy ; but she soon revived again, to gladden his heart with words that sounded far sweeter in his ears than the most entrancing music.

ST. GEORGE JOUSTS FOR SABRA'S LIFE

When the king heard that the strange knight who had vanquished the Baron of Chester was St. George of England, he was overjoyed and came running with all haste to embrace him. The champion was disarmed, and after his wounds were washed with white wine and milk, he was dressed in silken garments. Then the king conducted him and his lady to the banquet hall, where they feasted for that evening, and afterwards kept open court, entertaining all comers for the space of one month.

At the end of that time St. George remembered his companions who had so gallantly taken up his quarrel against the sultan of Persia. He felt that his honor would suffer if he remained away any longer, so both he and the beautiful Sabra took leave of the English court, and set out for Persia to meet the other champions.

XVII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MAGIC TOWER

St. George and his lady had traveled through many countries, on their way toward Egypt and Persia, when they came at last to the country of the Amazons, a land inhabited only by women. There they found the towns and cities deserted, and the land untilled; and when they should have enjoyed the hospitality of palaces, they were obliged to stay in the fields, where in place of silken curtains their couch was draped with clouds.

They wandered about for days, not knowing where they were, nor finding any one to tell them, till at last they were gladdened by the sight of a rich pavilion, standing in the open plain. It was of green and crimson satin, bordered with gold, and it was tied with cords of green silk. The posts that held it up were of ivory, and on the top stood a great eagle of gold, while at the corners two silver griffins shone against the sun. As they stood admiring its beauty there appeared at the entrance a maiden queen, crowned with an imperial diadem, who was the fairest creature they had ever seen.

Amazonian maidens attended this bright being. In their hands were silver bows of the Turkish fashion, and at their backs hung quivers full of golden arrows. Upon their heads they wore silver helmets set with pearls and precious stones that glittered against their flowing hair,

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MAGIC TOWER

which shone like burnished gold. Indeed their beauty was dazzling, but of a most strange and warlike character.

The queen herself was clothed in a gown of green, laced on with cords of gold and cut away to show the whiteness of her neck. Over it she wore a crimson kirtle²⁰ lined with moss-colored velvet, while her wide sleeves of green silk were embroidered with flowers of gold and with rich pearls.

St. George alighted from his horse, and, humbling himself, he said, "Queen of Beauty, grant, I pray, that a weary traveling knight and his lady may rest in your pavilion, for your country lies desolate and affords neither food nor lodging."

"Sir Knight," answered the maiden queen, "you are welcome to the hospitality of my pavilion. As for the desolation of my kingdom, since you have seen it, I will tell you the story.

"About twelve years ago a necromancer came to this country,—Osmond, the cunningest magician on earth. He fell in love with me, and because I would not listen to him, he wrought the destruction of my realm and kingdom. By his magic arts he raised from the earth a mighty tower, wherein such enchantments are constantly wrought as obscure the light of the sun and the brightness of the skies; the earth is blasted with a terrible vapor; and from the tower a black mist descends, which spreads a general darkness over the land for the space of twenty-four leagues, so that the country is wasted and destroyed and my people are fled out of it.

"Osmond, some months since, departed into Persia, where he is gone to aid the sultan in his wars against the Christians, but he left the guarding of the magic tower to a

terrible giant. This giant is the ugliest monster that was ever seen or heard of. He is thirty feet high ; his head is three times larger than the head of an ox ; his eyes are bigger than saucers ; and his huge teeth can break both iron and steel. His body is as black as a coal and as hard as brass, and he has such strength that he can carry three armed knights off at once, yet he is so light and swift of foot that no horse can run away from him. He has been attacked by great troops of armed men, but all of them together could never do him any harm, with sword or spear or any other weapon."

"As I am a true English knight," replied St. George, "so soon as morning dawns I will go to that enchanted tower, which I will enter in spite of the giant, and break the enchantment. Then I will travel into Persia and chain this Osmond and lead him up and down the world like a bloodhound."

"A most dangerous adventure," said the Amazonian queen, "from which no knight has yet returned ; but if you will go, brave knight, know that the tower lies to the west about thirteen miles."

That night Sabra and St. George were royally feasted, and they slept soundly in the pavilion ; but at dawn St. George armed himself, and taking leave of the queen and of Sabra, whom he committed to her care, he set out for the tower.

About noon of a bright, sunny day he entered a deep valley, into the depths of which he rode until, after about ten miles and a half, he could no longer see the sky or even a ray of light, for it was dark as night there and more dismal than the deepest dungeon.

At last he found a mighty river, with waters as black as pitch and so full of serpents that he could never have

crossed it alive but for the magic in his sword Ascalon, which Kalyb had given him. About his head flew monstrous birds and numbers of griffins big enough to carry away an armed knight, horse and all, in their talons. There were black flies as big as hazelnuts that stung him and his horse grievously, and the griffins struck him so furiously with their talons that if he had not defended himself with his shield, he would have been killed.

In face of these dangers he rode on until he came to the gates of the enchanted tower, where the giant sat in his iron coat upon a block of steel, with a mace²¹ of steel in his hand. At sight of St. George he gnashed his teeth so that they rang like strokes on an anvil, and ran at him as if he were going to take the champion and his horse up in his teeth and carry them into the tower ; but when St. George saw his mouth open, he took his sword and thrust it in with all his might, so that the giant roared with a sound like thunder. His mouth frothed, and his eyes rolled in his head like flaming brands ; but he was forced to yield to his conqueror and beg for his life. This was granted on condition that the giant would tell all the secrets of the tower and afterwards become the champion's servant.

The giant agreed to this and told the story of the tower in these words : "There was in this country, about twelve years ago, a cunning necromancer who built this tower by magic ; and within it he caused a fire to spout from the earth that cast a smoke over the whole land, destroying the fields so that the famished people fled. The magician also made the black river, over which you are the first to pass alive. Within the tower stands a fountain, which is the only thing that can quench the fire. If any

knight can get some of the water and cast it upon the fire, the darkness will cease and the enchantment will end."

St. George bade the giant keep guard while he tried the adventure. Then he went by the windows of the tower, which were sixteen yards in length and breadth, till he came to a little wicket through which he must needs enter. It was set thick with spikes of steel, so that no one should come near it; but St. George fearlessly opened it, when out came such a volume of smoke that neither torch nor candle would burn in the place. The brave champion entered and went down the stairs, although he could see nothing; but so many were the blows that fell upon him that he was forced to his knees, and so descended, holding his shield above his head.

At last he reached the bottom alive. There he found a great vault from which came a terrible heat; but beyond it he espied the fountain, so taking his shield he dipped up some of the water and threw it on the fire. The fire went out, the smoke cleared away, and the sun shone all about him. Then he saw that upon the stairs there stood many images of brass, holding in their hands the great steel maces which had so nearly killed him; but their power was ended now, for the enchantment was finished.

When St. George returned to the gate the giant gazed in wonder to see him return alive, and saluted him thus: "Sir, you are the flower of Christendom and the bravest knight in the world. While I live I will follow none other but you, and so I kiss your golden spur."

The valiant St. George graciously accepted this pledge of fealty, and went back to the Amazon's pavilion attended by the giant, who bore a tall oak upon his shoulders. The ladies, who had prayed constantly for the safe return of their champion, were overjoyed to see him, for now they

knew that he had achieved the adventure and delivered their country from enchantment. They did not wait to hear of his encounter, but took him at once to a bower of roses intermingled with creeping vines, which they had made for his lady's delight. There was Sabra, dressed in mourning, upon her knees in prayer; but when she saw that her lord had returned, she sprang to her feet and greeted him with joy.

The Amazonian queen feasted her guests and devised pastimes for them through the following day; but at night she took them to their sumptuous lodgings, where there was a bed framed with ebony wood and overhung with pendants of gold. The tick was filled with the down of turtle-doves, the sheets were of Median silk, and for a cover there was a rich quilt covered with damask wrought with Indian cotton and stitched with threads of gold. There St. George and his lady took their rest, while the giant slept outside at the foot of a pine tree.

In the morning St. George walked out to view the country. He climbed a high mountain about two miles from the queen's pavilion, from which he saw many desolate towns and towers, high and mighty castles, woods, meadows, and pleasant rivers, while round about the towns he saw wasted vineyards and pastures and untilled fields.

Then he saw, shining under the sun, the fair city of Themiscyra, where the queen formerly held her court. This city was surrounded by deep ditches and a strong wall with more than five hundred towers of stone. Within it were stately churches, whose domes and spires of gold and weathercocks of silver glittered against the sun. The burgesses' houses stood there like palaces, closed with high walls and barred with chains of iron from house to house. "Truly," thought the champion, "is this splendid walled

city called Themiscyra"; but while he mused upon its grandeur, beauty in distress was calling for his knightly aid and he heard not.

The giant had committed a dreadful deed. When he saw some of the beautiful Amazons walking in the woods where he lay resting, he seized and made away with them. Then he was afraid; and he ranged up and down the woods in terror, until he hit his head furiously against a gnarled oak and broke his skull. Sabra was with these Amazons, but she escaped into a thicket, dropping her long chain of gold in the middle of the path. When St. George returned and found that Sabra and all those who were with her had disappeared, and that the giant was not to be found, he was beside himself with grief. After he found Sabra's chain, he was sure that the giant had made away with her, and, fastening it to a branch of the gnarled oak, he was about to hang himself, when the wicked giant, who lay gasping at the foot of the tree, told the champion with his last breath that the lady he sought still lived.

St. George, seeing that the giant was now dead, searched the woods in every direction, calling, and crying Sabra's name, until he found her in the thicket, where she sat trembling with fear. Their joy for her miraculous escape from the giant was beyond words; but when they returned to the pavilion they mourned bitterly with the Amazon queen for the loss of her warrior maidens. Recovering somewhat from her grief, the queen bethought her of the debt she owed the brave knight who had freed her country from enchantment, and she offered him all the pleasures the land of the Amazons afforded; nevertheless, he soon set out again with Sabra, on the way to Persia.

XVIII

THE ADVENT OF ST. GEORGE'S SONS

As the English champion and his lady traveled toward the East, they came into a great wilderness overgrown with lofty pines, cedar trees, and huge oaks. The inhabitants were satyrs, fairies, and wood nymphs, who by day sported up and down the forest, and by night did the pleasure of Proserpine, the fairy queen.

The birds and whistling winds made such music among the leaves of the trees that the travelers' senses were enthralled, and they rode on until they were lost in the mazes of the forest. There they wandered for many days, till Sabra was able to go no farther, and so St. George made for her a bower of vines, between two hills which were covered with roses and other fragrant flowers. He made her a bed of moss and thistledown, set round with olive branches and orange trees, and there he left her to rest while he went up on a high mountain to see if he could find any way out of the wilderness.

Meanwhile Proserpine, who by favor of Zeus dwelt for a time in this forest, visited Sabra and presented her with three beautiful sons, who were wrapped in silk and laid in sumptuous cradles. Then at her command a winged satyr fetched from farthest India a coverlet of damask taffeta embroidered with gold, the richest that ever mortal beheld. This Proserpine laid on Sabra's bed, and finally she put

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under each child's pillow a silver tablet, on which were written, in letters of gold, their good and happy fortunes.

The tablet under the first pillow bore these words :

A soldier bold, a man of wondrous might,
A king indeed this royal babe shall die ;
Three golden diadems in bloody fight,
By this brave prince shall also conquered lie :
The towers of old Jerusalem and Rome,
Shall yield to him in happy time to come.

The tablet under the second pillow bore this verse :

This child shall likewise live to be a king,
Time's wonder for device and courtly sport :
His tilts and tournaments abroad shall ring,
To every coast where noble knights resort ;
Queens shall attend, and humble at his feet,
Shall love and beauty thus together meet.

Lastly, under the pillow of the third baby, the tablet read :

The Muses' darling for true sapience,
In princes' courts this babe shall spend his days ;
Kings shall admire his learned eloquence,
And write in brazen books his endless praise :
By Pallas' gifts he shall achieve a crown,
Advance his fame, and lift him to renown.

After Proserpine had delivered these golden fortunes she disappeared, and left Sabra wondering if she should awaken from this glorious dream.

Upon St. George's return he was struck dumb with amazement, but when Sabra told him all that had happened, he lifted up his hands to heaven and gave thanks. When he read the happy fortunes of his sons, he was filled with joy ; but, like a good father, he remembered that his family must need food, so he kissed his lady and the

THE ADVENT OF ST. GEORGE'S SONS

three smiling babies, and, taking out his trusty sword, went in search of provision.

In his absence a terrible thing happened. A lioness, a tigress, and a wolf came and took the babies out of their cradles. Neither their mother's strength nor her cries availed to help them, as the beasts bore them far away at a swift pace. St. George soon returned with venison and some wild fowl he had taken, and he was much amazed to find his lady beside herself with grief, and the infants gone. When he heard how they had been carried away, he threw down the venison he had brought on the point of his sword, and hurried off in search of them, vowing either to recover them or to lose his life in the attempt.

He wandered for a long time in the woods and mountains, like a man bereft of his wits, till at last, by the cries of one of the infants, he traced them to a cave at the foot of a hill, where he found them lying on a mossy bank and being fed, like Romulus and Remus, by wild beasts. The beasts set upon St. George so fiercely that he climbed an orange tree and pelted them with oranges, which they ate in such quantities that they were stupefied. Then, leaping down from the tree, he found it easy to cut off their heads ; and taking up the babies, he returned as swiftly as he could run, with them all in his arms. He found Sabra almost dead with grief, but joy soon revived her, and after they had feasted on the venison, they followed their happy stars toward Christendom.

After a few days' travel they arrived at the Bohemian court, where the three wonderful babies so took the fancy of the king that he gave them a royal christening, when the eldest was named Guy, the second Alexander, and the third David. The festivities lasted for the space of one month ; and

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

then the Bohemian king, for the love he bore St. George, provided most honorably for the bringing up of his three sons.

First he appointed three ambassadors to conduct the children to three different countries. The eldest, whose fortune was to be a soldier, he sent to Rome, which was then the first city of the world for military discipline. The second, whose fortune was to be a courtly prince, he sent to the rich country of England, which was the pride of Christendom for pleasures. The youngest, who was to be a scholar, he sent to Abelard at Paris, for he was thought, at that time, to be the greatest teacher in the whole world.

When the ambassadors were ready and the ships for their passage furnished, St. George and Sabra, with the Bohemian king and queen, and a train of lords and ladies, conducted the children on board. The wind was right, so that in a few moments they bade farewell to the shore and sailed away, and that was the last these parents saw of their sons for many years.

As they returned to the court they passed by an old monastery, within whose walls St. George discovered the grave of his father. He resolved at once to erect there a fitting monument, and the king commanded for him the services of the cunningest architects in his kingdom, and gave a ton of gold from his own treasury toward the work.

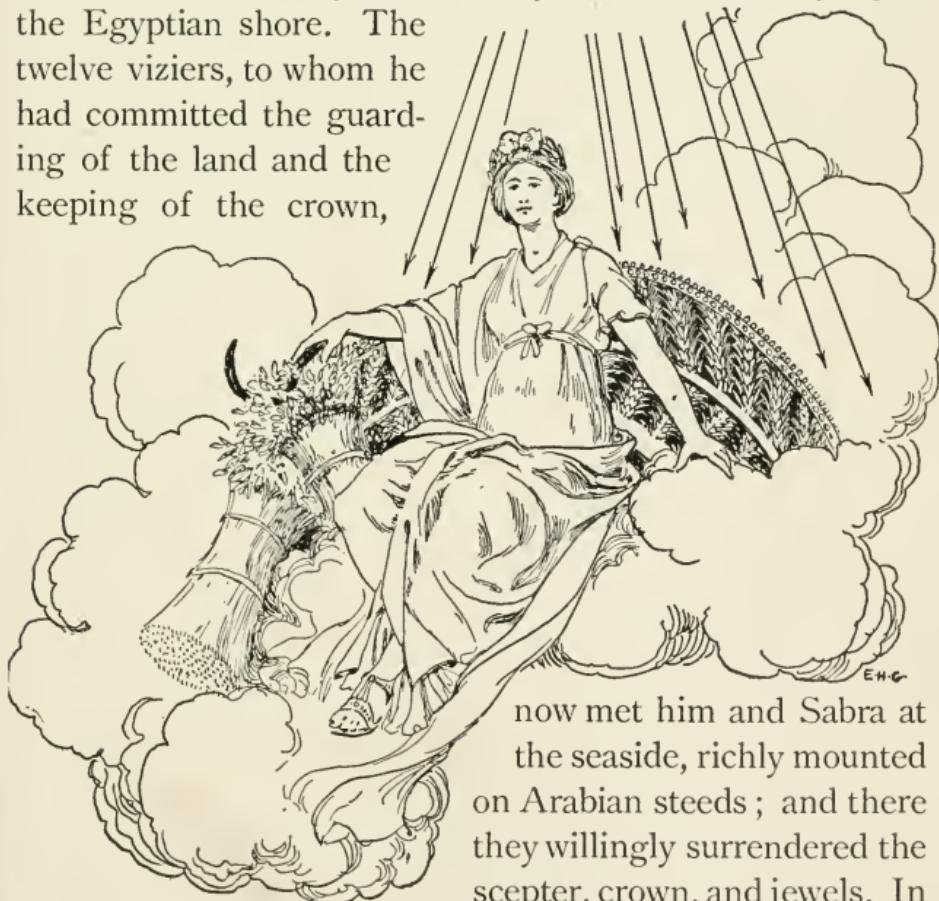
The foundation of the tomb was of marble, on which the earth was pictured ; the props and pinnacles were of alabaster set with knobs of jasper, and the sides and pillars were of jet. On the top stood four golden lions holding up a firmament that showed the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies, all wrought in gold and silver.

After this monument was finished, St. George and Sabra took leave of the king and departed on their journey.

XIX

SABRA IS CROWNED QUEEN OF EGYPT

Strange accidents and dangerous adventures befell St. George and his lady before they were cast finally upon the Egyptian shore. The twelve viziers, to whom he had committed the guarding of the land and the keeping of the crown,



now met him and Sabra at the seaside, richly mounted on Arabian steeds ; and there they willingly surrendered the scepter, crown, and jewels. In

the company of pashas and many other lordly attendants, they conducted the royal pair to Grand Cairo, which was

then the greatest city in the world. When St. George and Sabra, with their attendants, entered the gates, they were greeted with a joyous sound of bells, trumpets, and drums. The streets were gay with pageants, the pavements were strewn with fragrant flowers, and the walls were hung with rich Indian fabrics and curious tapestries.

They passed through all this festive show to the gates of the palace, where, in the first court, there was contrived, overhead, a golden pendant firmament, supported by a hundred angels. There descended from the clouds Ceres, the goddess of plenty, sitting upon a throne of gold, beautified with all growing things. When St. George and Sabra appeared, Ceres presented them with two sheaves of wheat bound up in bands of silver to show them that they had returned to a country of plenty and of treasure. Then she mounted again to the clouds, and there followed a display of fireworks, when the fiery planets themselves seemed to descend from heaven as a pastime.

In the second court St. George and Sabra found Mars surrounded by a camp of armed soldiers, who sounded their trumpets and drums and waved their silken streamers. All this martial display delighted St. George, and when he was about to leave the court, the god of war descended from his throne and presented him with the richest armor that ever eye beheld and the keenest sword that knight ever handled. They had been kept in the city of Grand Cairo for five hundred years, and were held as the richest treasures in the country.

Mars also presented Sabra with a mirror of price that was valued at a king's ransom, for it was made by magic art, and the virtues of it were such that to one who looked in it secrets were revealed and mysteries explained. One

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could see there the pageant of life at courts, past, present, and future, and if there was within a day's journey any hill or mountain where emeralds or gold lay hidden, the mirror would show the place and the depth of the mine.

Bearing their precious gifts with them, St. George and Sabra passed through the third court, which was adorned with scenes from the lives of the gods, and into the palace, where there was provided for them such a banquet as they had not seen since they left England.

Four and twenty days were passed in feasting, music, and dancing; then the coronation of Sabra took place. All Egypt honored her with triumphs and festivals, and there was no village so remote but it kept the day of the coronation, which was celebrated at Grand Cairo with tilts and tournaments.

St. George took part in all these royal festivities until he could no longer endure the thought of the six Christian champions fighting without him in Persia. He believed that honor called him to their aid; so leaving Queen Sabra on her throne, he put on his armor, mounted his warlike steed, and set out once more for the glorious fields of Mars.

XX

THE CHRISTIAN ARMY CONQUERS PERSIA

All this time the other Christian champions had been fighting in Persia to avenge the wrongs St. George had endured there for seven years.

When they had marched into the country about fifty miles, they were met by the sultan's fighting men to the number of about three hundred thousand, as against one hundred thousand of the Christians. There followed a terrible battle that lasted five days, but the Persians were vanquished at last, and those who survived fled, pursued by the Christians, who burned their forts and towns and razed their towers to the ground.

The sultan, and those of his soldiers who escaped, fortified themselves within the city of Grand Belgor; but the Christian army soon encompassed it and battered the walls with rams so that they trembled and split. The sultan, afraid for his life, hurried away as fast as he could to find Osmond, the necromancer, who had done so much mischief in the Amazonian country. The magician was in his tower, where he sat on a block of steel, dreaming over his spells of magic, when the sultan burst in crying: "Awake, Osmond, from thy dreaming trance, and save Persia! Awake, I say, and raise a troop of fiends to fight against these Christians that flock about our city!"

Just then there was a battering of rams against the walls that made the earth shake, and Osmond, starting up, cried:

"Not all the knights in Christendom can prevail against the great magician of the world. Let Europe do her worst ! I will cause the heavens to rain showers of stone upon their heads. I will raise a troop of spirits black as night to haunt them in their sleep ; and fiery spirits like dragons, spitting flames of fire, shall blast and burn the Christians in their tents of war. I will conjure spirits from the air, who will descend in the shape of beautiful maidens to charm the Christian champions to a magic tent, where they will hang up their armor and their weapons to rust. So fear not, mighty Persian, but to-morrow morning lead all your forces out from the city to battle with the Christians, and I will give you victory."

The next morning at sunrise the sultan sent his soldiers out to meet the Christians. The brave champions rode their coursers in the forefront of their army, but the cowardly sultan and his princes sat in iron chariots, surrounded by armed knights, and watched the fight at a safe distance. There was a furious battle, and heaps of men, especially Persians, had been slain, when the host of demons Osmond had invoked ran pell-mell into the midst of the Christian forces and, with flaming torches, fired the horses' manes and burned their trappings and banners. Then a darkness like night descended and a tempest came that tore up mighty oaks by the roots, moved hills and mountains, and blew men up into the air. Nothing daunted, the champions fought on with such fury that the pagans fell before them as leaves fall from the trees before the autumn gales.

Osmond erected his magic tent, finally, and evoked spirits in the shape of beautiful maidens, who enticed the champions from their duty. Just when it seemed that this

trick would win victory for the Persians, St. George arrived with fresh knights. He was overcome with shame at the plight of the other Christian champions, but he rallied their soldiers to follow him to victory, vowing that he would redeem the faithless knights, or die honorably in the attempt.

"Come, captains!" cried he. "Fight now for the honor of Christendom! Be triumphant conquerors or Christian martyrs." They were inspired with his zeal, and in a furious onslaught they fought their way through the horde of Persians and marched on to the enchanted tent, which St. George slashed into a thousand pieces with his sword Ascalon. There was a terrific noise of explosions and claps of thunder, and the tent and the magic maidens vanished in flames; but Osmond they captured and chained to a blasted oak tree, while vainly he called down the curses of Heaven upon them.

"Alas!" he cried, "my magic spells are ended, and my familiar spirits leave me here to starve. I have had power to rend the earth and to shake mountains, but now I cannot so much as unchain myself from this accursed tree."

In his despair the necromancer tore his hair and bit his wicked tongue till he could curse no more; but finally he ceased his struggles, and where he died was ever after a vale of walking spirits.

St. George, seeing the six champions sit there dazed and bewildered, cried in a loud voice: "Champions, arise! put on your armor and unsheathe your swords, for St. George calls you back to duty." The recreant knights obeyed like men waking from a trance, and then they went out to their soldiers, who greeted them with shouts of joy. So repentant were they for their folly that they never sheathed their swords nor took off their armor till,

in a seven days' battle, they slew two hundred thousand Persians, and so conquered Persia.

The sultan and his six viziers, in their iron chariots, withstood the Christians until St. George took the sultan as his prisoner and the viziers were captured by the other champions. Upon the viziers' promising to become Christians, they were set free ; but the sultan declared that the heavens should lose their brightness and the seas their tides before he would forsake his religion.

St. George, seeing that he could not force this mighty pagan to abjure his false gods, resolved to be avenged of the injuries he had once suffered at his hands, so he commanded that the fallen potentate be stripped of his princely robes and sent to the same dungeon where he himself had been so long imprisoned. The sultan soon wearied of the bread made of musty bran, and stagnant water for drink, so he dashed out his brains against a marble pillar that stood in the middle of the dungeon. The English champion had his dead foe laid in the royal tomb, while he assumed the government of Persia and established there Christian laws. When all the Persians, renouncing their false gods, had sworn allegiance to him, St. George, having won for himself and for Christ the kingdom of Barbary, the caliphate of Egypt, and the great empire of Persia, set out on a triumphal march to Christendom.

To commemorate his victories he erected many stately monuments during this journey, and in every country there flocked to his standard an innumerable company of pagans who wanted to follow him into Christendom as converts to his faith. In this princely manner St. George marched with his warlike troops through Asia and into Africa, whence finally they all embarked for Europe.

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The waters of the sea were smooth and the winds favored them as though the sea gods were directing their fleet, so that in a short time they arrived on the friendly shores of Christendom. As soon as they had landed, St. George knelt in the presence of thousands of followers and gave praise to God for their happy arrival. Then he commanded that the army be discharged and that every one of the soldiers, as well as their captains, be rewarded according to his deserts. Within seven weeks all this was accomplished, to the honor and glory of Christendom.

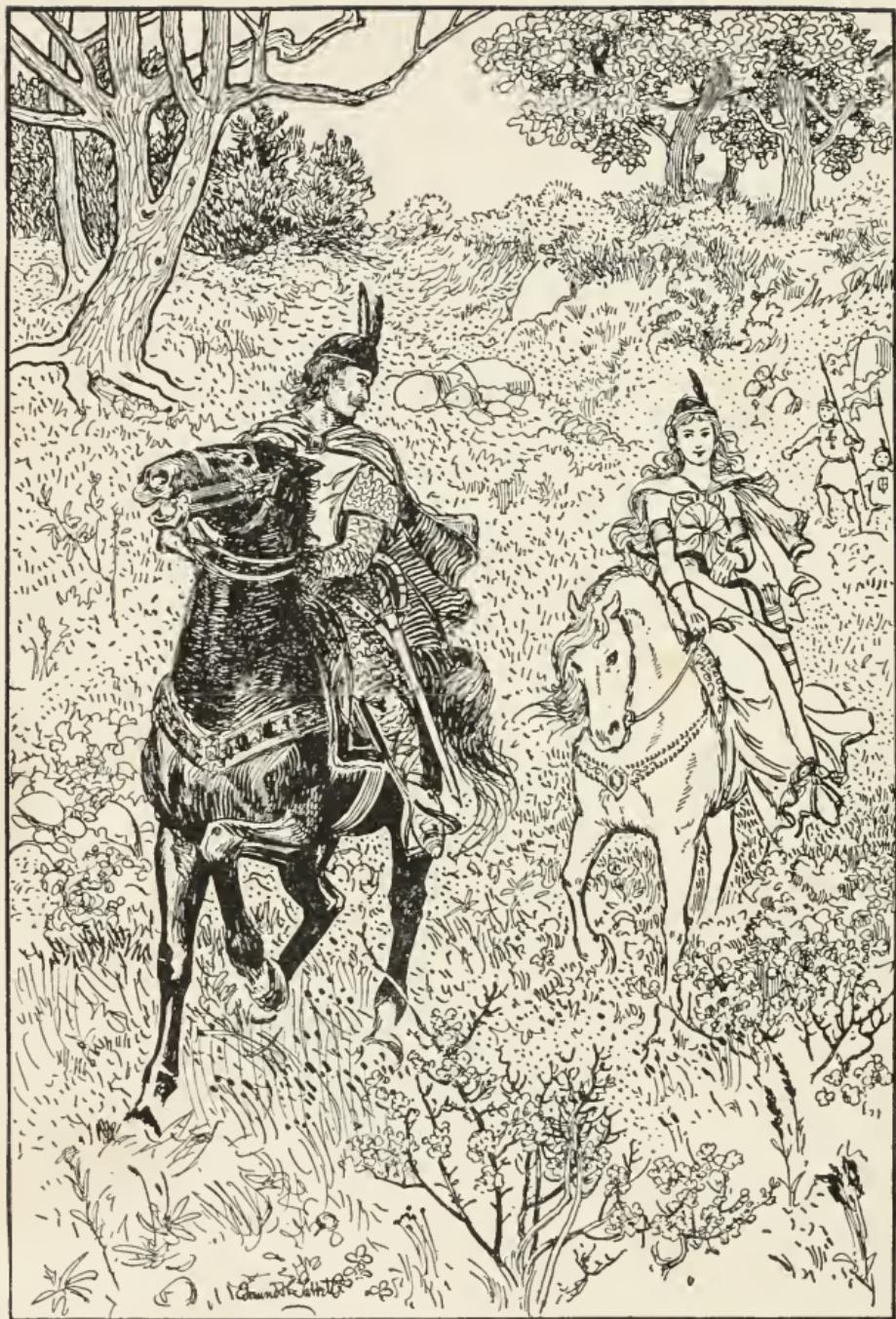
St. George now asked the other six champions to honor him with their presence in his own country, there to take some ease with him after their many battles ; so forthwith the Seven Champions of Christendom set their faces toward England.



THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

THE SECOND PART

*Relating the noble achievements and knightly fortunes of
St. George's three sons; the tragedies of maidens
and fair ladies; the strange endings of enchant-
ments and magic spells; the adventures
of valiant knights; also the deaths of
the Seven Champions, and how
they came to be called the
Saints of Christendom*



I

THE ROYAL HUNT AND ITS TRAGIC END

The Seven Champions braved a storm at sea and destroyed some bands of pirates, who set upon them to rob them ; but at last the chalky cliffs of England rose before them and they soon landed. Their arrival was celebrated with feasts and triumphs, especially in the famous city of London, which was the home of many beautiful ladies and gallant gentlemen.

St. George was overjoyed to see his beautiful Sabra, who, attended by a band of faithful knights, had come all the way from Egypt to meet him. Their gallant son Alexander, who had been brought up at the court of England, was there to welcome them, while Guy and David soon came from Rome and Paris, attended by trains of knights. They had grown to be princely young men, worthy sons of their royal father and mother, who, rejoiced to see them once more, made a great banquet in their honor.

Jousts and knightly sports were planned for the amusement of the three young princes, and a hunt was ordered, to take place in a spacious forest not far from London. St. George and his three sons, clad in green, with silver horns hanging at their backs, in scarfs of colored silk, were foremost of the hunters ; while Sabra rode beside her husband, mounted on a gentle palfrey and equipped like Diana, with bow, quiver, and breastplate of shining silver. They were

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attended by troops of mounted knights, and by others with boar spears in their hands, who followed the hunt on foot.

The cavalcade rode out about six miles from London to the forest; but no sooner had they entered its shady paths than three drops of blood fell from St. George's nose, and a flock of croaking ravens flew about him. These omens of evil troubled the champion, but just then a great stag appeared and the hunt began. Sabra rode gayly at the front, filled with delight to see what skill and courage her sons showed in the chase; when suddenly the stag turned and her horse started, throwing her into a prickly brake full of deadly thorns. This cruel accident put an end to the hunt, for when the poor lady was removed from the brake, it was found that she had received mortal wounds.

When Sabra knew that she must die she embraced her sons, charging them to follow in their father's steps by leading virtuous lives, aiding the oppressed, and punishing oppressors. Then she tenderly kissed her husband and, with a deep sigh, breathed her last in his arms.

Overcome with grief St. George vowed that he would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, barefooted and poorly clad, to visit the Holy Sepulcher, where he might pray for the pardon of his sins and for the repose of his peerless lady's soul. Meanwhile, his sons vowed that they would weep daily at their mother's tomb until some flower should spring from the earth in memory of her death, as the anemone sprang up where Venus wept to see Adonis slain.

Sabra's sad end turned the joy of the whole land into sorrow and mourning. Her funeral was celebrated with great pomp, and she was laid in a regal tomb. The pinnacles of the tomb were of the purest jet, its pillars were of silver set with jasper stones, and there were added, to

beautify it, pendants of gold, escutcheons of princes, and the arms of countries. Her image was cut in alabaster and placed upon a pillow of green silk, while directly above it hung an epitaph which her sons had engraved upon a tablet of silver set with precious stones.

After this tomb was erected, St. George placed his sons in the king's care and, leaving them all manner of riches with his blessing, set out upon the long journey to Jerusalem in company with the other six champions, who made his vow their own. They were dressed like pilgrims in russet gaberdines down to their feet, and in their hands they bore staves of ebon wood tipped at the ends with silver. The spikes on these staves were of the finest Lydian steel, and of such sharpness that they could pierce a target of tortoise shell. Upon their breasts the champions wore crosses of crimson silk, to signify that they were Christian pilgrims traveling to the sepulcher of Christ.

It was in the springtime that these knightly pilgrims left England. At sea the dolphins danced above the waters to assure them of success, and on land their toilsome progress was accompanied by such singing of birds that they forgot their weariness. In fact, their journey was attended by such good fortune that in a short time they crossed the seas and entered into Africa. There they climbed over rocks and mountains, they crossed deserts and they waded through rivers, they made their bed on the bare ground, and their food was the wild fruits of the forest. Indeed, they passed through many dangers and achieved many honorable adventures before they finally reached Judea.

II

ST. GEORGE'S SONS ARE MADE KNIGHTS

Meantime, the three young princes, who were left at home to mourn over their mother's death, disputed as to which one sorrowed the most. At last they agreed to put the matter to a test, and to consider him chief mourner, who should, within the space of one month, bring the rarest present to offer at her tomb.

The eldest went to an enchantress who lived in a cave in a wood some miles to the north of the city. He offered a great reward, and so she sent her familiar spirit to bring her all manner of flowers, notwithstanding it was the dead of winter and the snow lay deep on the ground. These flowers, as beautiful as ever grew upon the downs of Arcady, she made into a crown like a garland, and enchanted them so that they should never fade, but be always blooming and giving out fragrant odors. The young prince took the magic garland back to his mother's tomb and hung it upon a silver pillar that stood in the center of the monument.

The second son brought in his hand an ivory lute, upon which he played melodies that seemed like the harmony of angels. When he had finished he tied the lute in a damask scarf and hung it at the west end of the tomb, upon a knob of jasper stones, so that every breath of wind played sweet melodies upon it without the touch of human hands.

The third son came dressed in white silk, with a silver basin and a silver poniard in his hands. He pricked his tender flesh with the sharp-pointed weapon and let thirty drops of his blood fall into the basin, which he then offered as the dearest thing he could give to express his love for his dead mother. The two elder brothers, seeing that he had won, rushed upon him in a jealous fury, to catch him by the hair of the head and drag him round about the tomb, when it flew open and their mother's spirit appeared.

"Abate this fury," she cried. "Make haste to arm yourselves and go to the aid of your valiant father. You will find him in distress and in danger of his life. Away! I say, or else my troubled spirit shall never leave this world, but haunt your dreams in ghostly visions." With this she vanished and the tomb closed again.

The young princes were very much frightened; and they bound themselves with an oath to live in harmony and to stand by each other till death. Then they told the king what they had heard about their father, and falling upon their knees, they begged the honor of knighthood at his hands.

The king consented to grant their petition; and he not only gave them the honor of knighthood, but he furnished them with horses, armor, and everything that was needed for their journey. The gray palfreys he gave them had been bred upon the bright mountains of Sardinia, and they were swifter than Spanish jennets. They were richly adorned with gold after the Morocco fashion, but their saddles were framed like iron chairs with backs of steel, and on their foreheads nodded spangled plumes of purple feathers hung with golden pendants. The king gave the new-made knights, besides their glittering suits of armor,

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three priceless swords wrought of purest Lydian steel, and three lances bound about with plates of brass, from which waved silken streamers bearing their emblem, St. George's cross, the crimson badge of Christian knighthood.

Thus royally mounted and attired, the three young knights rode out of London in company with the king and attended by a train of lords and gentlemen, who conducted them to the seaside, whence they sailed away in quest of the famous champion of England.

The three princes passed through the straits, and with favorable winds soon landed upon the coast of France. When they had bountifully rewarded their mariners and sent them back to England, they mounted their palfreys and rode away southward. The pounding of their horses' hoofs, as they sped swiftly on their way, was music to their ears ; for now they had set out in search of knightly adventures, as had their renowned father, who in his first encounter so valiantly killed the burning dragon of Egypt to save the life of the princess who became their mother.

III

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GOLDEN FOUNTAIN

The Seven Champions had journeyed in their pilgrim's attire through many strange countries, when at last they came to Damascus, a city not only beautified with magnificent and costly buildings but furnished with the most precious gifts that nature can bestow. Here for a long time they rested their weary limbs and lived in the house of a rich Jew, who spent his wealth in the entertainment of pilgrims. His house was built of quarries²² of blue stone and supported by many pillars of the purest marble. The gates and entrance were continually kept open in sign of hospitality, and over the portal hung a brazen tablet on which was a picture of Ceres, the goddess of plenty.

The chamber where the champions slept was lighted with as many crystal windows as there are days in the year, and the walls were painted with as many stories as there have been years since the creation of the world. It was built foursquare, like the pyramids. The north wall was painted so that there seemed to be no wall, but high mountains of snow and mighty woods overhung with silver icicles. On the west wall of the chamber the god of the seas seemed to be riding upon a dolphin's back, while a troop of mermaids followed him, with their golden hair floating upon the silver waves. At night, when the travelers

THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

went to their rest in this wonderful room, seven sons of their host made sweet music on their ivory lutes, which induced the sleep of Elysium. When the Jew found that he had as guests the Seven Champions of Christendom, he told them the story of his life :

" I was once," said he, " the owner of a certain fountain of such virtue that it was worth the empire of India. In four and twenty hours the water would convert any metal into gold ; it would turn flint into silver, and common earth into good metal. This fountain was the source of such wealth to me that many foreign knights tried to rob me of it ; but fourteen of my elder sons defended it stoutly, until the fame of their valor and my riches came to the ears of a famous giant who lived in a cave upon the borders of Arabia.

" He came armed only with his steel coat, and with a mighty mace of iron that he carried in his hand, but he had a skin no dart could pierce ; so he conquered my fourteen elder sons and took possession of my magic fountain. I escaped by a secret passage with these my younger sons, and came to this mansion, where we have lived since then, giving of our wealth to knights and pilgrims. Hope was almost dead, but I feel it spring again within my heart, for I am assured by your presence that the hideous monster who guards my fountain will be killed, and that the deaths of my fourteen sons will be avenged."

The champions were much moved by this tale, and St. George said that he believed God had sent them there to avenge the Jew's injuries and restore his possessions ; so without any more words the Jew took them to his rich armory, where they found arms and trappings, and then to his stable, where stood seven steeds fit for the adventure.

Since there was only one giant to encounter, they decided to cast lots as to who should fight him. The first lot fell upon St. Denis ; so the next morning he arose early, attired himself in rich armor, and mounted on an iron-gray steed whose head was adorned with a spangled plume of purple feathers, he took leave of his companions and set forth upon his adventure. He found the giant, a most hideous monster, seated upon a block of steel before the golden fountain, eating raw meat and drinking the fresh juice of grapes.

St. Denis attacked him with all his might ; but the giant lifted him up, horse, armor, and all, and carried him under his arm to a hollow rock of stone, bound with bars of iron. This opened at a word from the giant, and he shut his prisoner inside with the fourteen sons of the Jew, who were still alive.

The next morning the lot fell to St. James, and he mounted a Spanish jennet caparisoned in a color like the waves of the sea. His helmet was beautified with a spangled black feather, and upon his breast he wore the arms of Spain. Thus bravely he rode forth, but he met the same fate as St. Denis.

The third lot fell to St. Anthony of Italy. He mounted a Barbary palfrey, whose head was decked with a plume of ginger-colored feathers adorned with many silver pendants. His armor glittered gayly in the sun, but his glory was soon over, for he too was carried off bodily to join the other prisoners.

The fourth lot fell to St. Andrew of Scotland. His steed was caparisoned after the manner of the Grecians, and his armor was varnished with green oils. Upon his breast he wore a cross of purple silk, while a long plume



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hung from his helmet. For all his bravery, the Scottish champion met the same fate as the others.

The fifth lot fell to St. Patrick, as adventurous a knight as ever lived. At sunrise he rode up to the giant, mounted on an Irish hobby that wore upon its forehead a plume of yellow feathers and was covered with a veil of orange-tawny silk. This knight's saddle was bound about with plates of steel like an iron chair, and he wore armor that was made of silver and steel. The giant was somewhat daunted at the sight of this champion, but he conquered him and carried him off like the rest.

The sixth lot fell to St. David of Wales, who, the next morning at sunrise, stood before the magic fountain in a glittering silver armor with a golden griffin shining on his breast. He had a long fierce encounter with the giant, who beat him with his great steel mace so that he was forced to yield at last and go to the prison in the rock.

St. George was the last to go, and saddened by the fate of all the brave champions, he chose a black corselet and mounted a black steed caparisoned in blood-red, which wore upon its head a plume of feathers that was like a flame of fire. Instead of a lance he took a steel javelin that had one end sharpened like the point of a needle, and on the other end a ball of iron. Then he took leave of the Jew and his seven sons, and set out for the golden fountain, where he found the giant sleeping most carelessly upon his block of steel.

St. George dismounted and looked at the hideous being who was his foe. The hair of the giant's head stood up like the bristles of a wild boar ; his eyes were like two blazing comets ; his teeth were long and sharp like spikes of steel ; and his huge hands were incased in jointed iron gloves.

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"Arise, monster!" cried St. George. "Deliver your captive knights or prepare to feel the force of my war-like arm."

The giant, who had been dreaming that a knight from the North should at last conquer him, started up in fright and tried to hit St. George with his iron mace. The knight skipped nimbly out of the way and struck at him with his javelin, which might as well have been run against an adamantine pillar. Then he turned the ball end and belabored the giant until, with a roar that shook the earth, that wicked monster gave up the ghost.

St. George searched all about until he found the rock where the knights and champions were imprisoned; then with his steel javelin he burst it open, and the captives came out and returned with him in triumph to the Jew's pavilion. When the Jew saw his sons returning, accompanied by all the champions, he swooned for joy; but he soon recovered and, welcoming them with great affection, took them to their chambers, where they were disarmed and their wounds washed in white wine and new milk. Then he gave them the best banquet he could devise, at which the younger sons extolled the champion's deed in music which they played upon their ivory lutes.

The champions rested here for a month, but when they saw the Jew and his sons in undisturbed possession of their magic fountain, they clothed themselves again in their pilgrim's attire, and went forward on their journey to Jerusalem.

IV

THE CHAMPIONS AT THE HOLY SEPULCHER

Without any further adventures the champions came at last to Jerusalem, where they went at once to visit the Holy Sepulcher and to make their offerings.

The Sepulcher was on Mount Zion, in the midst of the city, and it stood in a chapel built underground below the temple. The chapel gates were of burnished gold and the portals of refined silver. The tomb was cut out of white marble, curiously carved, and supported by columns of jet, inlaid with jasper and rubies. In it there burned a sweet-smelling taper, maintained by twelve of the noblest virgins of Judea, clad always in white silken garments.

For many days the champions offered up their devotions before the sacred tomb and washed the marble pavements with their tears.

One evening, as they knelt with the twelve maidens at their worship, they heard an unseen voice from a hollow vault in the temple, chanting these words :

"Rise, noble champions, linger here no more;
Your arms the world requires. Depart therefore,
And with your valor aid the Christian cause.
The time for noble action nearer draws.
By mighty deeds, immortal crown your name,
And write your works in characters of fame.
The twelve white virgins that do here reside,
Horses and armor will for you provide."

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This chant closed with a strain of heavenly music; and the virgins led the champions to a place in the side of the mountain called Zion, where they found armor and horses suited to their lofty station. When they were armed and mounted, they took their leave of their fair guides and rode out of the city in search of new adventures.

In the wilderness of Arabia, notwithstanding it was summer, they traveled many leagues through deserts and over mountain tops without finding anything to eat. They grew faint with hunger, and wished that in place of gold and silver they had brought food.

One night, lighted by the silvery beams of the moon, they lay down to rest in a grove of trees, but they were so famished that they could not sleep. The next day they rode many miles looking in vain for something to eat, and when night came they had barely strength enough left to dismount from their horses.

The next morning they set forth again, and as they rode slowly and wearily on, thinking that they and their horses must soon die from hunger, they saw a smoke rising on the side of a mountain not far distant.

"If that smoke comes from any fire that is cooking food," cried St. George, "we will be guests there with or without a welcome." Then he put spurs to his horse and rode on ahead, but he was soon stopped by a giant, most terrible to behold, who came up out of a cave which was cut in the solid rock. He seemed as tall as a tree and as huge as a boulder, and his staring eyes looked like flaming torches. He did not trouble to get his club, for he thought it would be easy enough to kill a single knight with his fist; but St. George rose in his stirrups and struck him such a blow on the head with his battle-ax that, with a

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roar of rage and pain, the giant fell to the ground just as the other champions came up, full of praise for St. George's great valor.

When they saw that the giant was dead and could give them no more trouble, they all went into his cave to look for food. They found there a caldron as big as a brewer's copper, standing upon a frame of steel that was supported by iron pillars, and boiling over a great fire. In this huge caldron the flesh of two fat bullocks was cooking.

The sight of food gave the half-starved champions new strength and they all fell to work. Some turned the beef in the caldron, others mended the fire, while others looked about for bread and wine, which they found in great quantity hidden away in a secret place. Their feast was soon ready, so they ate and drank merrily ; and when their hunger was satisfied, they mounted their horses and set forth again gayly, in search of knightly adventures.



V

THE SHEPHERD AND THE CRYSTAL IMAGE

The champions, after they left the giant's cave, crossed over the mountains, from which they could see great plains where there were fair cities and prosperous towns. But as they descended, they came presently into a fertile valley which lay between two rivers. Numerous flocks of sheep were feeding there, and flowers bloomed everywhere.

As they rode happily along, they saw by the way a great arbor of purple roses ; and in it lay, upon a couch draped with white cloth, a crystal image in the form of a beautiful maiden. Beside the couch sat an old man in a cypress-wood chair, mourning. He was dressed like an Arcadian shepherd ; but his face was wrinkled and worn, and his eyes were almost blind with weeping.

At this woeful sight the champions dismounted to inquire the meaning of the mystery, and then they saw that the cunning artist had made the crystal image to look as if the lady had suffered torments. She had, apparently, been lashed with whips and bound with cords, while about her neck lay a scarf that seemed as if it had been used to accomplish some desperate purpose.

The champions were moved to tears by this spectacle, and St. George asked the old man to tell them the meaning of the crystal image that lay upon the couch beside him, and why he mourned there so dolefully, weeping himself blind.

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The aged mourner replied by saying, "Fortune has sent you to avenge the inhuman murder of my daughter, whose image you see here.

"I am," he went on, "lord of all these plains, and though I am but a simple shepherd, Providence has so rewarded my industry that I have great possessions. I was, above all, happy in two beautiful daughters, who have been cruelly killed, and here," said he, pointing to the shrine, "you see one of them." The champions gave a deep sigh and begged him to tell them about the tragedy, because they were true knights and would avenge him in full upon the one who had committed this awful crime.

The old man said that he had no longer the strength to repeat this tale, and so he had written it down. Thereupon he pulled from his bosom a golden-covered book with silver clasps, and begged St. George to read aloud the story he had written in it.

St. George sat down amongst the other champions on the green grass and read aloud the story that was written within the golden book. This was what he read: "Not many miles from here, upon an island, lives a man by the name of Leoger, who calls himself the Knight of the Black Castle. He is rich and powerful, but very wicked, as you shall hear.

"I knew nothing against him, so I consented to his marriage with my elder daughter, and the wedding was celebrated with great pomp. It was not a year later that, in a way too cruel to tell, he killed my younger daughter, whose crystal image lies here. When his wife heard of it she died of grief.

"The Black Knight, afraid now of what he had done, buried her secretly at the saddest time of night in a solitary

garden under his castle wall, and while he was there he heard a hollow voice from the depths of the earth cry out : ' For these wicked deeds thy life draws to a shameful end ; and thy castle, with all thy treasure therein, shall be destroyed or fall into the hands of him whose daughter thou hast so cruelly murdered.'

" Upon this he set a watch in every passage near his castle to arrest all travelers and hold them until they promised, on oath, to assist him against his enemies. In the meantime a squire came to bring me the news of the tragedy, which so oppressed me that I passed three days and nights of dumb agony ; then, falling into a deep sleep, I dreamed that my younger daughter came to me and told me where she lay in the wood, dishonored for want of burial. She begged me not to attempt revenge, but to have her image placed near a highway used by adventurous knights, assuring me that certain Christian champions would come that way, who would avenge her wrong. Then in my dream she vanished and I awoke. Telling no one of my purpose, I hastened to have this image made and put here, where I have stayed ever since, lamenting her untimely death and writing down the tragedy. Hereby I entreat you to avenge this cruel murder."

The champions were filled with horror and indignation by this tale, and guided by the shepherd, they set out at once for the island where lived the wicked Knight of the Black Castle.

VI

ST. GEORGE'S SONS AND FAIR ROSANA

All this time St. George's sons had been traveling in search of their father. They had visited many lands and had achieved many adventures, but they were still in quest of the famous Champion of England when they landed on the coast of Armenia, near the island where the Knight of the Black Castle lived.

Leaving their boats, they made their way inland by a broad, straight path into a forest, where sweet song birds filled the air with their warbling. Here they had traveled almost two hours when they saw, under a clump of trees, a small tent of black cloth. They found that it was empty, but as they looked about for some sign of life, they saw the prints of little feet upon the sand. They followed these until they came to the top of a hill that overlooked the water and from which they could see fair towns and princely palaces.

Meantime, in a pavilion, under the shade of some trees, a beautiful lady lay dying upon a silken couch. By her side stood her daughter, clad in silk as white as the lilies of the field, and her beauty was like moonlight on a freezing winter night. The lady was making bitter complaints about her husband, who had proved faithless, and she wrote a letter which she solemnly bade the fair maiden deliver to the wicked knight who had so deeply wronged them.

Then the poor lady died, and her daughter, amidst her sobs of grief, vowed to set out upon this quest of her father and to do faithfully her mother's last bidding.

The young knights now appeared on the scene and offered to help her.

She told them that her dead mother had been queen of Armenia, but that she had lost her kingdom because of the false knight Leoger,—the knight who had afterwards killed the shepherd's daughter and then shut himself up in his Black Castle with a cunning necromancer, whose skill in magic had now grown to be so excellent that all the knights in the world could never conquer the castle.

As for herself, she told them that she had lived all her life in this forest with her mother, and that she was called Rosana, for at her birth there was upon her breast a mark that looked like a purple rose. On account of this mark, and because she had played fearlessly with the wild beasts when she was a baby, she said her mother believed she had powers that destined her for strange fortunes.

St. George's sons took Rosana by the hand and vowed never to leave her until they should take her to the Black Castle. Then while she mourned over the untimely death of her mother, they took their daggers and dug a grave under a bay tree and laid the poor lady therein. Then they covered the grave with green turf, and afterwards with the points of their daggers they engraved her epitaph upon the bark of the tree.

The young knights provided Rosana with a palfrey that had a black caparison, and a spangled plume of black feathers upon his forehead. Then they set out with her in their boats to find the Black Castle. They soon reached the island that belonged to the Knight of the Black Castle,

and they were riding along by the side of a clear, deep river, when their horses became uneasy. Looking about for the cause of the alarm, they saw crossing their path a terrible monster in the form of a satyr. He was as big and broad as any giant; his face was three feet long and he had only one eye, which was in his forehead, where it glittered like a blazing comet. His body was covered all over with long shaggy hair, and from an opening in his breast came a beam of light.

When this monster heard the noise of the horses, he turned, and as his blazing eye rested on the lady and the knights, he rushed toward them furiously, brandishing a knotty maple tree. The knights gave a great shout and drew their sharp swords. The monster laid about him furiously with his maple tree, but the knights dismounted and sprang about so nimbly that he could not touch them. Meanwhile they slashed at his great body until he ran away and hid himself in a cave, which he closed with a stone that he pulled in after him. The knights soon found in the rocky front of the cave a cleft through which they looked, and when they saw the monster lying upon the ground, they thrust in their swords and made an end of him.

The three valiant young knights returned in triumph to Rosana, who waited for them, sitting bravely upon her palfrey, though she was half dead with fright. Filled with courage by the success of this adventure, they quickly remounted their horses and set out once more with Rosana to follow the path by the deep river, for they believed it would lead them in the end to the Black Castle.

VII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK CASTLE

St. George and the other Christian knights had come, in the meantime, to avenge the murder of the shepherd's daughter. When they landed on the island where Leoger and the magician had fortified the Black Castle, they too followed the road beside the deep river, rejoicing in the soft and balmy air, and charmed all the way by the beauty of the trees and flowers and the sweet singing of birds.

They came out, finally, upon a broad meadow, where there were feeding wild and tame harts, wild boars, lions, and gentle lambs. Marveling greatly at this wonder, they crossed the meadow in safety, and found themselves at last before the Black Castle. It was compassed about with a moat that was almost two hundred paces wide, and the bridge was drawn up ; so, although they could see the diamond gate of the castle, the champions could find no way to reach it. Finally, they espied a pillar of jasper that was wrought with precious stones in strange workmanship and adorned with chains of gold which were made fast to it by magic art ; on this pillar hung a silver trumpet with these lines engraved upon it :

If any knight should dare this place to see,
A bridge will fall at the first blast from me ;
But he must look for blows beyond the gate,
And once inside, repentance is too late.

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St. George, undaunted by this threat, put the instrument to his lips and blew on it such a blast that the foundations of the castle trembled. The bridge was let down and the diamond gate opened ; the knights alighted from their horses and gave them into the old shepherd's hands to be fed upon fragrant grass, while they went in to try their adventure, for they vowed either to achieve the downfall of Leoger or never to return.

Drawing forth their sharp-edged falchions, they entered the gates, and, once safe within, as they looked about they saw some winding stairs, which they descended. They had not gone many steps when a great darkness came upon them ; they groped their way along and down the narrow stairway until they thought they must have come to the middle of the earth. But finally they came out into a court, and, looking up, they saw, standing on the battlements of the castle, the treacherous knight with his necromancer and several giants, who brandished clubs and maces of steel.

The knights jeered at them and called them cowards, and challenged them to come down and fight it out in the courtyard. They taunted Leoger especially, as the author of so much mischief. He was furious, and raging up and down the battlements like an angry lion, he cried out, "Knights or peasants or whoever you are, I care not a hair of my head for your upbraiding, for I mean to sprinkle the pavements of my castle with your blood."

Upon that he sent down his twelve giants to kill them or to take them prisoners, while he and the necromancer remained in safety upon the battlements.

There now took place, between the knights and the giants, a dreadful fight that lasted for many hours. The

steel maces of the giants and the falchions of the knights clashed with a din as if the Cyclopes were hammering upon their anvils ; and at every blow fire flew from the steel like sparks from flaming furnaces. The skies echoed their strokes and the ground shook as with an earthquake, while the blood of the clumsy giants wet all the stones of the courtyard ; by sunset there was not one of them alive. Leoger stormed with rage and grief and would have thrown himself from the battlements, but his necromancer held him back and promised that his art should accomplish what strength had failed to do.

The necromancer now began his magic spells and charms, and, as the Christian knights were taking off their armor to cool themselves and dress their wounds, he evoked a spirit of the air in the shape of a beautiful woman, who stood just inside the iron gate, weeping and lamenting.

The champions drew near to ask the cause of her sorrow, when another spirit in the shape of a woman appeared, tall and majestic, clad in silver armor, with a sword sheathed in a golden scabbard that was hanging at her side. Upon her shoulder she carried an ivory bow and a quiver of gold, and her hair fell loosely from under a helmet of silver set with precious stones.

While the knights were looking and wondering what queen this might be, they were struck suddenly and heavily upon their shoulders, so that they fell down on their knees ; but, jumping up quickly, they turned to strike their cowardly assailants, when they saw what appeared to be five or six knights running into the castle by a door in the corner of the court. In order to enter with them to punish their cowardice, the champions followed with great

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haste, but the moment they passed the door they fell through a trap into a deep, dark dungeon. On their guard now against new surprises, with swords drawn, they groped about for some exit from this horrid place.

The pitchy darkness was dispelled at last by a glimmer of light that came through a crevice in the wall and showed them a great bed with curtains of silk and golden pendants. Upon this six of the champions sat down to rest, when they fell at once into a deep sleep, for the bed was enchanted. St. George escaped the snare because he had agreed to keep watch while they slept, but he had no idea that they had fallen into a magic sleep.

Meantime the magician visited St. George in the dungeon. He took an ugly, fearsome shape that would have terrified any other man. His hair seemed to be hissing snakes, and his mouth gave out flame. This fearful creature threatened St. George with a miserable death, telling him that he would soon be meat for some furious beast, and that his bones, like those of the knights who had come there before him, would help to pave the dungeon.

In spite of these threats the champion's courage did not fail him, and if the magician had not vanished, St. George would have cut off his head with one blow of his magic sword. No sooner was he gone, however, than St. George heard a sudden noise and beheld a window opening by little and little, so that there appeared a clear light, by which he saw that the walls were dashed with blood and that the pavement was made of newly stripped bones. Then he heard a great rushing sound, and saw, coming out of a den, a mighty serpent with wings, whose body was bigger than any tree. She had only two feet, but each foot had three enormous claws. Her open mouth was so huge

that an armed knight with his horse could scarcely have filled it. She had two tusks as sharp as needles, and all her body was covered with glittering scales of different colors.

St. George stood with his shield raised, while the great reptile came toward him with fury, her wide mouth open and her wings spread. Finding she could not pierce his helmet with her sharp tusks, she pulled so furiously at his shield that she tore it from his arm. When he tried to strike her with his sword, she flew above his head, and he was able to give her a blow underneath, where she had no protecting scales.

This put the winged serpent in such pain that she lashed about with her tail and wings so that St. George could conquer her only by performing this deed — surely the bravest recorded of any knight. He threw down his sword, and running suddenly at the serpent, he caught her round the body in his strong arms and squeezed her so that she could not defend herself with her sharp claws. Although she beat him furiously with her wings, he held her fast until, after a long and fierce struggle, he crushed out her life.

As the great reptile fell to the ground, St. George barely escaped with his life from the fury of her death throes; but as soon as he could reach his sword, which lay near by, he plunged it deep into her heart. When, at last, she lay quite still, the champion knelt down and gave thanks for his delivery. Then, being very weary, he sat down upon the enchanted bed to rest himself, when he too fell into a deep, magic sleep.

The magician knew that St. George had conquered the winged serpent and now lay upon the enchanted bed with the other champions, in a sleep from which he was

determined there should be no waking. So he created magic lamps to burn before the entrance of the cave, and as long as they continued to burn, the sleepers could never be roused. Their light could only be put out by the water of an enchanted fountain which he raised by magic in the court ; and the water could be transported only by a maiden who, at her birth, should have the form of a rose pictured on her breast. The magician was sure that he had outwitted the champions, and Leoger, when he found that the seven doughty knights who had boldly come to vanquish him were now in his power, was so puffed up with pride that his Black Castle could hardly contain him.

All this while the old shepherd, who had been left in charge of the champions' horses, looked anxiously for their return. When they did not come he believed that they had all been destroyed ; and as they had met their deaths in his cause, he vowed that he would spend the rest of his days in the green fields before the gate of the Black Castle, tending the steeds of those brave knights and mourning their untimely end.

VIII

ROSANA ENDS THE MAGICIAN'S SPELL

One morning, at break of day, Rosana and the three sons of St. George came to the Black Castle. Before the walls they were astonished to see seven noble steeds feeding in a green pasture, and beside them an ancient, sorrowing man, who was carving in the bark of trees the story of his past griefs. When they asked the old man why he stayed so near this dangerous castle, he answered them :

" Brave knights, within this castle is a wicked tyrant called Leoger, who murdered my two daughters. To avenge this inhuman crime, seven Christian knights came with me to this accursed spot. They entered the castle seven days since, leaving me to care for their horses till I should hear of their victory or of their deaths; but they have not returned, and I am sure that some evil has befallen them."

These words struck the sons of St. George speechless, for they believed the seven knights were the Seven Champions of Christendom, whom they were seeking; but at last one of them, recovering himself, said that they too had come to be avenged on the Knight of the Black Castle for the wrong he had done a queen.

The lady and the three knights now dismounted and committed their horses to the keeping of the old shepherd, who promised to pray constantly for their success.

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The knights soon adjusted their armor and put their shields upon their arms. Then, in company with Rosana, they went up to a portal of the castle, which glittered in the sun like burnished gold. There hung a mighty copper ring with which they beat upon the gate until the magician appeared, looking out of a marble-pillared window. He had just risen, and over his shirt, which was embroidered in black silk, he wore a robe of damask velvet.

"You strange knights," he cried, "if you desire to have the gates opened and your bones buried in the vaults of our castle, turn back to the jasper pillar behind you and sound the silver trumpet that hangs upon it; so shall your entrance be easy, but your exit miraculous."

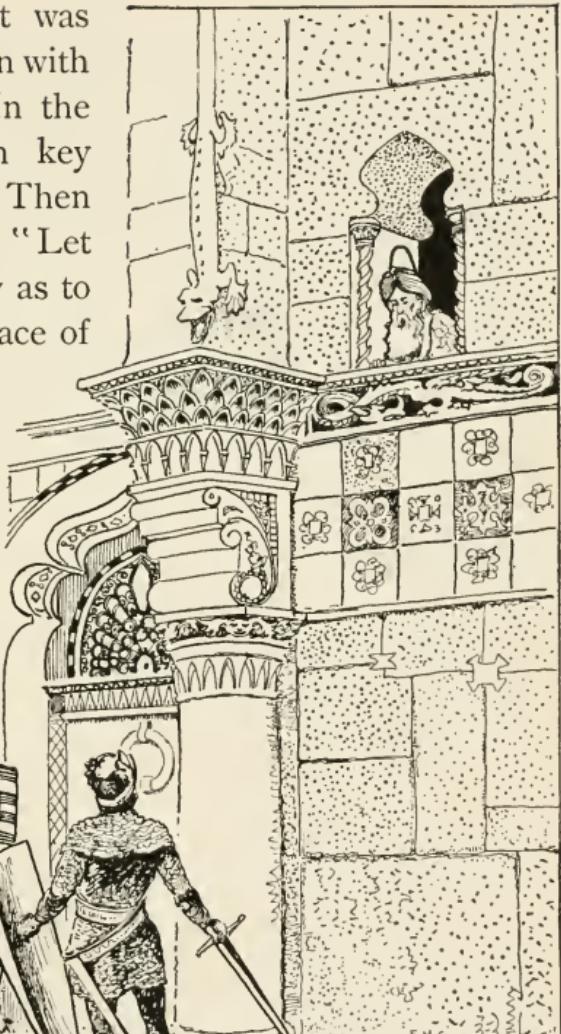
With that he left the window, and they went back and blew the silver trumpet. The drawbridge fell down as it had for the Seven Champions, and the gate opened of its own accord. The knights passed over, and as they entered the court in which the champions had fought the giants, they saw the enchanted lamps burning before the entrance to the cave where the champions all lay asleep upon the enchanted bed. Under the lamps hung a silver tablet on which these words were engraved :

Whilst seven fatal lamps burn bright,
This place can never yield to knight.
If they're extinguished from a fountain near,
By one who on her breast a rose doth bear,
The strange enchantment quick shall disappear.

Rosana knew at once that she was the maiden appointed to finish the enchantment, so she begged the young knights to make haste and find this fountain whose potent water she must fetch. They searched every corner of the castle till they had found a door in the wall, and when they came

to it they saw that it was made of very strong iron with a wicket²³ of steel. In the keyhole was a brazen key which they turned. Then they heard these words, "Let no man be so foolhardy as to enter here, for it is a place of terror and confusion."

Nothing daunted, they entered, but found themselves in pitchy darkness and greeted by howls such as might have come from Pluto's dog.



They took off their steel gloves, for they wore rings set with great diamonds that gave light enough for them to see their way about the hall, which was very large. On its walls demons and fearsome scenes were pictured by magic art to terrify all beholders; but in the center of this hall

stood the enchanted fountain, and the knights went toward it with their shields upon their left arms and their drawn swords in their right hands. They tried to fill their helmets with water from the fountain, when there appeared before them a terrible, flaming griffin, which struck at them so fiercely that they were forced back. They threw down their shields, and taking their swords in both hands, they attacked the griffin, whereupon a whole legion of fiends appeared, spitting forth flames and breathing smoke from their nostrils. The brave young knights fought these fearful creatures valiantly and came again to the fountain, but now the water itself flowed away from them.

Rosana, who had followed after the knights, stood looking on with terror at the fight ; but she knew that she was the maiden with the picture of a rose upon her breast who was appointed to this work, so she picked up a helmet that had been knocked off in the fight and, running to the fountain, filled it with water and quenched the magic flames as if they had been mere waxen torches.

Then the sky began to grow dark, for it was overspread with thick, black clouds. There were thunderings and lightnings, with a noise as if the world were coming to an end, and the longer this noise endured the greater was its fury. By these signs the knight of the castle knew that the magic lamps were extinguished and the enchantments of his domain at an end. So, fearing the vengeance of the champions, he fled secretly from his island, while the necromancer was borne away by two spirits in the shape of dragons, which carried him swiftly through the air in an ebony chariot.

The Seven Champions did not know that they had been enchanted, and so when they awoke they were ashamed to

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find that they had been sleeping. St. George gave voice to the thought of every one in these words : "Where now is our valor and our strength, renowned throughout the world ? It is forgotten and worthless, for we have buried our honor, our dignity, and our fame in slothful slumber upon a silken bed."

When they went up to the courtyard the three young knights came to salute them, and St. George, at sight of his three sons, was filled with joy. The champions and the knights spent some time in relating their adventures and explaining how they came to be in the Black Castle ; then they went to search for Leoger and his magician, only to find that they had left the castle, with all its treasures, as spoil for the victors.

Rosana, thwarted here in doing her mother's bidding, asked the champions to give her good speed upon her journey, for she had vowed to travel up and down the earth till she should find her recreant father.

The knights believed that Rosana was under the protection of heaven and born to some strange destiny, so they furnished her for the long journey. They found for her in the castle a woman's armor that was made of silver rings woven together in meshes of gold. It was as light as a tiger's skin, but no weapon could pierce it, for it was fashioned by magic art. They also found a steed standing in the stable, whose fore part was the color of a wolf and the other half black with white spots. His feet were cloven so that he did not need shoes ; and his neck was long, with a little head and great ears hanging down like a hound's, while there came out of his mouth two tusks like an elephant's. This steed, which she liked beyond any she had ever seen, they gave to Rosana, and then they presented

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her with their ten diamond rings, which they begged her to wear always upon her fingers for remembrance. She thanked them for their kindness and for the knightly aid they had rendered a maiden in distress. Then she leaped into the saddle and rode out of their sight.

The champions now remembered the old shepherd, whom they had almost forgotten in the joy of their deliverance and the pleasure of their meeting with the young knights. They found the old man outside the castle gates, where he prayed and tended their horses. He was speechless at sight of the brave champions, whom he believed to be dead ; but they paid him the deference due to his age, and brought him in and gave him the government of the castle, with all its store of pearls and treasure, which they bade him use for the relief of travelers who might come that way.

For six days the Seven Champions and the three young knights feasted and refreshed themselves on the good things they found in the castle. At last, however, they felt that they must rouse themselves and bid farewell to slothful ease ; so, to the deep grief of the old shepherd, they mounted their warlike steeds and set out once more in quest of adventure and to fulfill their knightly vows.

IX

LEOGER, ROSANA, AND THE MAGICIAN

Leoger, after he fled from his castle, went up and down the world, a prey to remorse. One morning he entered a deep forest, for the sun was hot and he wanted to rest under some green myrtle trees that shaded a clear fountain, whose stream made a bubbling noise on the pebbles. There he lay down on the soft grass to sleep.

Meantime Rosana had traveled far, over hills and mountains, through dales and solitary woods, when, on this same morning, she turned into a narrow path that led her to the depths of the forest where her father lay sleeping. Dismounting, she sat down under a chestnut tree to rest, when presently she heard a deep groan, and going to see who might be in distress, she found a knight lying on the grass under a myrtle by a fountain. His armor was russet, barred with black steel and heavily enameled to agree with the sadness of his heart. He was large and well proportioned, but he looked worn with grief.

As Rosana stood looking at him, he turned upon his grassy bed and moaned in his sleep, "Woe unto me, wretch that I am! Traitor to the fair queen of Armenia!"

Rosana knew by this that at last she had found her father, so she spoke to him. He started to his feet amazed as she took a letter from a secret place and gave it to him, saying, "Here, false knight, are the last words that were ever written by the fair hand of the Armenian queen."

Leoger put out a trembling hand and took the letter. When he had read this last message from the queen whom he now so deeply mourned, he was moved to tears. "Tell me," he cried, "where I can find her."

"Alas!" replied Rosana, "she is dead."

In a fury of grief the penitent Knight of the Black Castle drew his dagger and plunged it into his breast; then he fell dying upon the green grass where he had so lately slept.

Melted by this deed of repentance, Rosana ran to her father and took off his armor, which was made by magic art. She lifted up his shield, that bore a russet flag on which was pictured the god of love with two faces,—one fair and bound about the eyes, the other fierce and furious. As she bent over him, his dim eyes opened for a moment, and she told him who she was.

Leoger gazed on his new-found daughter, while he bewailed the fact that he must leave her alone to face again the dangers of a cruel world. Then he bade her make his grave beside her mother's, and with his last breath he cried, "Daughter, farewell! Good fortune preserve thee and take thee forever into her favor!"

Rosana laid her father's body under a broad-branched pine tree and covered it with leaves and grass; then she hung his armor on the boughs of the tree, hoping that the sight of it would bring some knight to her assistance.

You remember how the necromancer went away from the Black Castle in a chariot drawn by two flying dragons. He traveled far, but at last he came into a thick forest, where he alighted to refresh himself. Looking about, he saw a knight's armor hanging on a lofty pine tree. He went up to examine it, and, although it had begun to rust, saw

that the armor was magic and of great value, so he took it down and started to put it on. Just then he heard a voice that said, "Be not so hardy, knight. Prepare to win this trophy by the sword."

Turning around, the magician saw, standing near by, a maiden who was richly armed with a strong enchanted armor, and he went up to her with his sword drawn. Rosana, for it was she, struck him a terrible blow on his helmet, so that the sparks flew. Then he struck her helmet so hard that the sound echoed through the mountains. There followed a terrible fight, but the magician was at last obliged to beg for mercy, which Rosana granted on condition that he should carry away her father's body and lay it in a grave beside her mother's.

The magician agreed to this; so he laid the body of Leoger in his iron chariot, and, as soon as they had taken their seats in it, the flying dragons drew them through the air like a whirlwind. When they reached the spot where the queen of Armenia was buried, the necromancer solemnly interred the body of the false knight whom he had served at the Black Castle.

Rosana's promise to her dying mother was now fulfilled; but the dangers she had faced and the hardships she had endured in the search for her father had so wearied her that while she mourned at her mother's grave she breathed her last.

The magician laid Rosana beside her parents, and then he erected a wonderful tomb over the three graves by means of his magic art. Upon four pillars of fine jasper he set a dome of crystal. Underneath he spread a carpet of gold on which lay three figures most cunningly carved,—a queen, who grieved, although she had a crown of gold

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upon her head; a knight in armor; and a maiden with ten diamond rings upon her fingers. At their feet stood two golden pillars, and between the pillars lay the effigy of an old shepherd with his sheephook at his side. Near this tomb, to guard it, lay a great beast with a lion's head, a wolf's body, and a scorpion's tail, who continually breathed out flames of fire.

Round about this wonderful structure there was set a wall of iron in which were four gates studded with diamonds, and over each gate was written in mystic characters the histories of those who lay within.

The necromancer's work was now finished, so he took up his abode inside the iron wall, where he consorted with furies and walking spirits, who left their seals upon him as a witness that he had sold to them both his soul and his body. This was the end of a once noble duke, who used his magic art to do evil and so became evil and sold himself to the demons of the lower world.

X

THE TOURNAMENT AT CONSTANTINOPLE

The knightly deeds of the Seven Champions of Christendom had won them at last such fame throughout the East that kings and princes wished to see them. The Greek emperor, who was holding court at Constantinople, greatly desired their presence; so he sent heralds far and wide to proclaim a tournament to be held in that city within six months.

The Christian champions, when they heard this proclamation, set out at once for Constantinople, where they found already assembled many pagan knights of valor and strength, among whom were the Prince of Fez, the king of Arabia, and the king of Sicily and his brother, both of whom were giants.

The day of the tournament came, and the ladies and damsels took their places in the galleries, all most richly attired. The emperor's daughter, Alcida, sat amongst the ladies, glittering with gold ornaments like Phœbus in the crystal firmament; but the emperor sat on his throne under a tent of green velvet. The great court swarmed with people who had come to see the tournament; and far above, in a high gallery, the Christian champions, unseen themselves, stood looking on.

At last the pagan knights began to enter the lists. First came the king of Arabia mounted on a courser. He was

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in black armor studded with silver knobs, and was attended by fifty knights in the same livery. Thus he rode about, making great obeisance to all the ladies. After him came a pagan knight, who was Lord of Syria. He was armed with a tawny-colored armor and followed by a hundred knights dressed in velvet of the same color. They all rode about, making obeisance to the emperor and the ladies ; then the trumpets sounded, and the king of Arabia and the Lord of Syria spurred their coursers and came together with great fury. In the second encounter the king was unseated and fell to the ground, after which the victorious pagan lord rode proudly up and down.

Then the Prince of Argier entered the lists. He was armed lightly in silver mail, with a bright breastplate of steel, but his pomp and pride exceeded that of all the other knights. Nevertheless, he was overthrown in the first encounter by the pagan knight, and so were fifteen other knights from fifteen provinces, to the great amazement of the emperor and the whole assembly.

The valiant Lord of Syria now rode six times up and down the lists before any one entered the tilt yard. Then came the brave Prince of Fez. He was in white armor wrought with knots of gold, and he was followed by a hundred knights in white satin. They rode about, making their obeisance to the emperor and the ladies ; then the trumpets sounded, and the two knights spurred their coursers on with such fury that the Lord of Syria was thrown to the ground. At once the huge king of Sicily entered. He was armed with a glittering hauberk of fine steel, and was followed by two hundred knights appareled in cloth of gold ; and every one of these knights had in his hand an instrument of music on which he played a delightful melody.

After this king and his knights had made the customary obeisance, he stood ready to fight the Prince of Fez. When the herald gave the sign, they spurred their horses and came together with such force that their lances shivered in the air. In the second encounter the young prince was thrown backward from his horse, with the saddle fast between his legs. Then the Sicilian king fought so furiously that he unseated every knight who opposed him. He was now the victor; and he was riding proudly up and down the lists for the admiration of all the people, when there was heard a tumult of horsemen that drew near, and St. George entered the lists.

The English champion was clad in purple armor adorned with golden stars, and before him rode the champions of France, Italy, Spain, and Scotland, all mounted on coursers and bearing in their hands four silken streamers of four different colors. The champion of Wales followed him, carrying his shield, on which was portrayed a golden lion in a sable field, while the champion of Ireland carried his lance, which was of knotty ash strongly bound about with plates of steel.

St. George rode around the lists to make his obeisance, first on one side to the emperor and the princes, and then on the other to Alcida, the emperor's daughter, who sat amongst her ladies and damsels. To them he doffed his helmet with the courtesy of a true knight, and then, taking his shield and lance, he made ready to joust. At the sound of the trumpets the two knights ran together furiously, and St. George unseated the giant king of Sicily. Then he made a round of the tilting yard amid great applause. After this every knight of consequence fought with the English champion, yet in two hours he overthrew them all.

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Near the end of the day the giant brother of the Sicilian king entered the lists, carrying in his hand a mighty spear, whose sharp point of steel glittered in the eyes of all the court. He was attended by one squire only, who was attired in silver mail and bore another lance. This fierce giant, without showing any courtesy to the emperor and the ladies, sent his squire with his spear to challenge St. George to an encounter.

The English champion very courteously accepted this challenge; so without any delay the trumpets sounded, and the two knights ran at each other with their lances in rest. When St. George saw his enemy, contrary to all the rules of the tournament, suddenly raise his lance to his shoulder to kill him, the noble champion, in defense of his life, struck such a blow with his own lance upon the breast of the treacherous giant that he fell down dead.

By this time the sun had set and the trumpets sounded the end of the jousts for that day. The emperor's daughter, Alcida, gave her glove to the victor as a trophy for his helmet, and the emperor came down from his throne into the tilting place to greet the champion of England and invite him to the palace, where he would receive the honors due the triumphant champion of the tournament.

XI

DULCIPPA AND THE TWO-HEADED KNIGHT

The Greek emperor, at whose court the Christian champions were resting from their adventures, had a son named Pollemus, who was in love with a beautiful maiden of humble birth called Dulcippa. The father of the prince was such a mighty potentate that he would not consent to his son's marriage with one so far beneath him, and Pollemus agreed to bid Dulcippa farewell.

The place appointed for their last meeting was about a mile from the emperor's palace. Dulcippa arrived first, and as she sat under the shade of a myrtle tree, waiting for the prince, she saw coming toward her a hideous being, whose body was covered with locks of hair, and whose two heads, two mouths, and four eyes were all as red as blood. This horrid creature caught Dulcippa up under his arm and carried her away over the mountains into another country.

When Pollemus arrived he found Dulcippa's silver scarf lying on the ground, and believing that some evil had befallen his lady, he vowed that he would search the world to find her and avenge her wrongs. He went back to the court and, hiding his grief from his father, selected a hauberk of silver and a shield of russet enameled in black, which he gave into the keeping of a faithful friend, who found him a ship and put the armor on board secretly, together with two of the best horses he could find.

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When all was ready the prince, with only a page for company, embarked in the darkness of the night. He commanded his mariners to weigh anchor, and in a short time they were far out of sight of land.

Pollemus sailed through deep seas three days and three nights. On the fourth night, as he was singing with his lute, he heard from a passing bark what seemed to be the cry of Dulcippa in distress. The prince, with his page and four mariners, left the ship at once in a small boat to follow the bark, but they rowed all night without overtaking her.

The next day a swift galley of sixteen oars came across the waters, and as it passed them Pollemus saw in it three knights in bright armor, who were the sons of the English champion. He called out to be taken on board, but the rowers, unheeding, passed swiftly by.

The Prince of Constantinople, furious at the slight he thought had been put upon him, took an oar himself and plied it with such strength that he soon overtook the galley and leaped upon it. Then there began a battle between him and one of the sons of St. George, which lasted all day and into the night. Neither won any advantage, but at last, together, they lifted their swords and struck, each upon the other's helmet, with such force that both fell down senseless at the same moment upon the hatches. When they came to themselves they made peace and declared their names. Pollemus told his story, which so moved the English knights that they commanded their rowers to put about and follow with all possible speed the way the bark had gone.

At daybreak they saw a shore, where they landed and set out by a path which they traveled until they met a woodsman, who, when they asked him what country and land this might be, told them that they were in a part of Armenia.

"But," said he, "I beg you to go back, for the lord of this country is a furious monster called the Two-Headed Knight, and no stranger escapes from him alive. Indeed, but yesterday he brought a lady here, whom he whipped and beat most unmercifully, as if he meant to kill her."

Pollemus fell in a swoon at this news, but St. George's sons revived him, and they all set out to find the unhappy Dulcippa. After riding for some hours they heard a moaning that seemed to come from a stone pillar which they saw not far away; but coming up to it they found there, bound fast, the fair lady of Pollemus. She was beside herself with pain and fear, and when the knights had freed her she did not know them, but thought she was still in the power of the monster. Pollemus would have reassured her, but just then the two-headed monster, mounted on a furious steed, returned to torment his captive again.

He saw that the knights had freed the lady, and in great wrath he demanded why they had come. One of the three valiant brothers answered, and the enraged monster spurred his horse to leap upon the knight to kill him, but he sprang nimbly out of the way. Then there began a fight, in which the English knights received so many blows that their bright armor was stained with blood, and their helmets were bruised with the fierce strokes of the monster's falchion. Finally, one of them struck the Two-Headed Knight across the knee and cut off his leg, so that he fell to the ground, where he raged and cursed fate until the other two brothers cut off his two ugly heads.

Meanwhile Pollemus had soothed his lady's fears, and the mariners, who always carried provisions along with them, prepared a banquet at which her recovery and the death of her tormentor were celebrated with the greatest joy.

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At the end of three days they all left Armenia, took the galley back to their ships, and sailed away. After some days they landed not far from Constantinople. Dulcippa then wrapped herself in a black veil, and Pollemus and the three knights put on black armor. So, like mourners, they went to the palace. It was ten o'clock in the morning when they arrived, and they found the emperor and the Seven Champions with many other princes in the great hall.

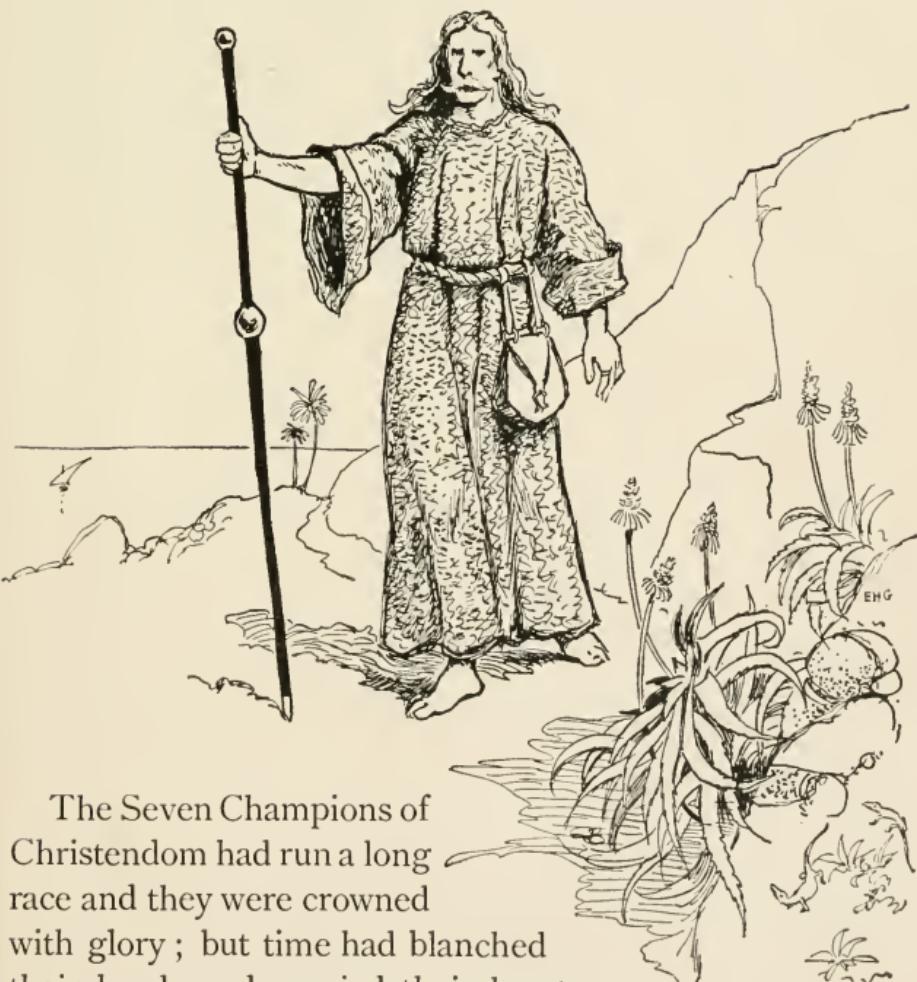
One of St. George's sons advanced toward them, and, making obeisance, addressed them in these words : "Great Emperor and noble princes, this black knight has come to your court to prove his lady the most deserving in the world, and himself the faithfulest knight. This we will maintain, with your leave, against all adversaries, and we beg your Majesty to give judgment."

The emperor consented, and on the green before the palace those four overthrew more than four hundred knights. St. George and three others of the champions entered the lists, and ran three violent courses against the black knights without moving them. Seeing this, the emperor gave judgment that the faithful knight should possess his veiled lady ; but he demanded that they all make known who they were. Thereupon the black knights cast off their armor, and the English champion was overjoyed to see his gallant sons once more, while the emperor received Pollemus with open arms.

The Flower of Chivalry was now assembled at the Greek court in the city of Constantinople, and with jousts and feasting the days passed swiftly by, until the Seven Champions of Christendom set out upon their final quest.

XII

THE GLORIOUS DEATHS OF SEVEN SAINTS



The Seven Champions of Christendom had run a long race and they were crowned with glory ; but time had blanched their heads and wearied their hearts so that one by one they returned to lay down their arms and to prepare for their long rest, each in his own country.

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The first to part from his brothers-in-arms was St. Patrick. He set out from Constantinople in palmer's weeds, and after long and weary travel he reached Ireland, where he lived as a hermit, praying to God in woods and waste places.

Finally, he had a house built for him from quarries of stone, in the shape of a tomb. When it was finished he entered and shut himself in, never to come out again, and his food was given to him through a little hole in the wall, which was all the window he had. In that gloomy place the holy man lived, and prayed to God night and day for three years. At last, he dug his grave with his own hands, and his time being come to die he lay down in it. When the people came again to bring the hermit food, the only answer to their call was the empty air blowing in and out, so they knew that the holy man was dead.

The whole country united to honor him. His little house was pulled down, and in place of it a stately building was erected and called St. Patrick's Chapel. Over his grave they set up a rich monument, with pillars of pure gold, where for many years sick people came to be healed. Thus the Irish champion's memory was kept green, and in honor of him, Ireland's patron saint, one day of the year is kept for his festival, when the people wear upon their hats a cross of red silk in token of his many adventures under the Christian cross.

Some months after St. Patrick left Constantinople, St. David set out, fully armed and alone, to go to Wales. Before he arrived, he heard that his country was overrun by a savage sort of people, thirsting for blood, so he pressed forward, gathering Christian knights to his aid until, when he came to Wales, he had about five hundred in his train.

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When this valiant band entered the champion's country they found that the people were fled, the cities destroyed, and the land laid waste. St. David, filled with grief at the sight of this desolation, cried out: "To arms, brave knights! I will be first to give Death's challenge. For my colors I wear upon my helmet a green leek set with gold, and if we drive out these pagans, the leek shall ever after be worn by Welshmen in memory of this day, the first of March." In the fields near by there were leeks growing, and each knight picked one and set it in his helmet. This sign, by which they knew each other, preserved many from death in the battle that followed; for just then a great army of pagans came rushing down from the mountains. They were of such mighty stature, and they laid about them so furiously with their iron clubs and maces of steel, that it seemed as if St. David's little army won their victory by a miracle. St. David, however, lost his life; for he became so overheated in the battle that he died soon after, to the great grief of the knights, his followers, who mourned him for forty days.

St. Denis, richly armed and furnished, was next to set out for his native land. When he came into France, a jealous and cowardly knight of the Order of St. Michael, who feared the famous champion, told the French king that a strange knight had come,—one who would undermine his power, and cause his people to worship false gods.

The king thereupon decreed that St. Denis should die, and he ordered his men to seize the strange knight in his chamber when he lay asleep; otherwise a score of knights could not have taken him. The Christian champion knew not why he was condemned to death, yet before all the

court he met his fate bravely, and his last words were : "I die for Him whose colors I have worn from infancy. My blood I offer to my country as the best gift I can bestow. Farewell, knighthood ! Farewell, honorable adventures and princely achievements, for death waits at my back." Then he stood silent, and in the presence of the king and hundreds of people his head was cut off.

There followed such a thunder clap that the false knight of St. Michael and the executioner fell dead. The king was amazed, and now knew that the strange knight was a Christian, and that he had suffered wrongfully ; so in memory of St. Denis he ordered a church to be built which was ever after the sepulcher of French kings.

St. James left Jerusalem on foot. In place of his shining sword, he carried an ebon staff in his hand ; his head, now white as thistledown, was covered with a broad, gray, pilgrim's hat ; and instead of armor he wore a russet gaberdine. Nevertheless, in the patches of this gaberdine there were sewed up gold and jewels of the greatest value ; and when he reached the borders of Spain he built at his own expense a sumptuous chapel which is called by his name to this day. To maintain it, he bought the adjoining lands, and he placed choristers within it to sing, day and night, alleluias to his Redeemer.

The people so worshiped the noble champion of Christendom that the king, who was a cruel tyrant, grew envious, and had St. James with all his choir of singers closed up together in the chapel and starved to death. Afterwards, such a light shone from the chapel as if it had been the glorious palace of the sun, while there was still heard from within it the sound of celestial music.

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This miracle so amazed the whole country that they established St. James as their patron saint ; and the hatred they bore the king so weighed upon the spirits of that tyrant that he refused all food and pined away and died.

St. Anthony was the next to leave Constantinople, and he went straight to Rome. The Pope held his court there, and the great and splendid city, which the champion had not seen for many a year, was filled with marvelous buildings upon which he gazed with wonder. There were monuments of emperors, consuls, orators, and conquerors ; there was the wonderful temple of the twelve sibyls, in which all their prophecies were enrolled ; there was the house of Romulus and Remus, who built Rome ; there was Pompey's theater, counted as one of the nine wonders of the world ; there was the Emperor Nero's tomb, the martyrs' tombs, and many relics that had been brought from Jerusalem.

In the midst of these wonders he came upon a chapel dedicated to himself, called "The Honor of St. Anthony," where there were alabaster statues of the Seven Champions of Christendom, with the stories of their adventures, combats, tournaments, and battles, and an account of their sufferings, imprisonments, dangers, and enchantments. All this was pictured by magic, and there was a legend inscribed over the entrance, saying that the patron saint of the chapel should not die until he had seen this wonder. When St. Anthony read this he knew that his end was near, and kneeling there in the chapel, upon the bare marble, he prayed to God until destiny cut his thread of life. There the emperor had him buried ; and over his tomb was set a magnificent chair in which, for many years afterwards, the Roman conquerors received their laurel crowns.

St. Andrew had a great love for St. George, his brother-in-arms, but the longing to see his native country so grew upon him that, at last, he too set out alone on his long homeward journey. When he reached Scotland he was entertained as if he had been an emperor. The streets were lined with people to welcome him home, while the king lodged him in his own palace, and held a tournament in his honor that lasted for fifteen days.

The Scottish champion, now an aged man, sat as a spectator at the tilts, and he gave the knights great praise ; but when the tournament was over, he begged leave of the king to depart, because he desired to spend the rest of his life in penitence and religious contemplation, for the good of his soul. Taking leave of his Majesty and of the nobility and knights who were there, the Christian champion went up into a mountain far away from the king's court, where he lived in a cave as a hermit. The ignorant mountain people, who were pagans, feared some evil would befall their gods through this strange man who prayed to an unknown God, so they put him to death and took his head as a prize to the king. The king, filled with grief at the loss of this good man, raised a force of knights who put to death every person that, in any manner, had consented to the death of St. Andrew. In the course of time a monastery was erected on the spot where he was slain, and the noble martyr became the patron saint of Scotland.

After St. George was left alone with his three sons, Guy, Alexander, and David, the thought of the other six champions now traveling on the way to their native countries preyed upon his mind and he no longer enjoyed his life in Constantinople. So he called his sons together

and they bade farewell to the Grecian emperor and to his court. Then, putting on their shining armor, they traveled away toward England, whose chalky cliffs St. George had not seen for twice twelve years.

When they reached that pleasant country, they rode along until they came in sight of the city where St. George was born. He had scarcely looked upon her glittering pinnacles, when the inhabitants, who came out to meet him, put an end to his joy with the doleful news of a poisonous dragon that lived upon Dunsmore Heath. They said that many people had been destroyed, and that fifteen knights had already lost their lives in trying to kill the venomous monster.

St. George vowed to put an end to this dragon or lose his life in the attempt; so he took leave of his sons, and rode out to this encounter as bravely as he had once gone out to meet the burning dragon of Egypt. On Dunsmore Heath the dragon crouched, yelling, in a deep cave, but when he saw his adversary he came forth and ran toward him with great fury. The champion's horse nimbly sprang to one side, and the dragon, by the force of his onslaught, turned over on his back with his feet up. St. George, with his horse, leaped upon the beast, and stood there goring him through and through with his spear.

The champion achieved his adventure, but he received his death wound from the deep stabs of the dragon's poisonous sting. Nevertheless, the brave knight summoned all his strength and crossed the moor back to Coventry, where outside the gates his three sons and all the inhabitants stood waiting for him. He presented them with the dragon's head; but then his strength failed, and in the arms of his sons he yielded up his noble life, while the citizens were still acclaiming their joy at his victory over the dragon.

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St. George was buried, on the twenty-third of April, in the city of his birth ; and his death was deeply and solemnly mourned by all, from king to shepherd, for the space of one month. Then the king, as a fitting tribute to the memory of their noble father, established the position of the great champion's sons.

The eldest, Guy, he made earl of Warwick, and high chamberlain of his household ; the next, Alexander, he made captain general of his knights of chivalry ; and the youngest, David, he appointed to be his cupbearer, and director of all his revels and pleasures.

Meantime, a stately monument was erected in honor of St. George, and by the wish of all the people there was added to his title, Valiant Champion of England, the greater one of Patron Saint. His effigy, which shows him in the act of killing the dragon, is given as a badge of honor to the noblemen of England ; and princes are proud to wear, in his memory, the Order of the Golden Garter.



NOTES

¹ *Champions* were the knights who were victorious in the tilts and tournaments, and who were successful in achieving their adventures. These adventures were usually of their own seeking, and their purpose was expressed in the vow of knighthood.

² *Satyrs* were ugly creatures, part man and part goat, who lived in caves in the woods. They had the feet and legs of goats, short horns grew on their heads, and their bodies were covered with thick hair. They roamed about, frightening maidens and playing pranks on the sylvan goddesses, who were called nymphs. They were supposed to be the attendants of Bacchus, the god of revels.

³ A *falchion* was a short, broad sword, curved at the point, that was much used during the Middle Ages. It was a favorite weapon of the knights.

⁴ *Ascalon* was the name of St. George's magic sword. A knight's sword was very dear to him, for it was of all his weapons the one most intimately connected with his adventures. He frequently gave it a name, and attributed to it supernatural power. Some of these swords became so famous that they have come to be known by name in legendary history and epic poems.

⁵ The *caliphs* were hereditary successors of Mohammed,—spiritual and temporal rulers of the Mohammedans.

⁶ *Pashas* and *viziers* were the military governors of provinces under Turkish rule, as Egypt was at this time. The viziers were of the higher rank and had the distinction of three horsetails carried before them; the pashas had only two.

⁷ To fire their beacons, they built fires in iron cages, which were suspended on high poles, to warn the people of all the surrounding country that they must rally to repel the attack of some enemy.

⁸ *The Great Emir* was the chieftain of the wandering tribes of Arabs — the Bedouins of the desert.

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⁹ *Masques* at this early date had not developed the dramatic form they took later, but were merely fantastic and splendid masquerades, accompanied by music and dancing,—a form of amusement much in vogue as an entertainment in palaces and in connection with banquets.

¹⁰ A *palfrey* was a small saddle horse used by ladies, and also by knights on occasions when the war horse, or courser, was not necessary. The Spanish *jennet* and the Irish *hobby* were small horses adapted for the same uses as the English palfrey.

¹¹ *Walking spirits* were probably what we know as "ignis fatuus,"—those flames that float above the ground in marshes and old burying grounds, and were once supposed to be the manifestations of spirits.

¹² The word *rampant*, as used in describing coats of arms, signifies that the animal pictured upon the shield in profile stands upright upon the left hind foot, with the other feet raised in an attitude of attack.

¹³ A *palmer* was a pilgrim whose whole time was spent in visiting holy shrines. He traveled incessantly and lived upon charity. His dress consisted of a gaberdine, which was a long garment like a monk's, made of coarse wool. He carried a wooden staff as tall as himself, with a knob in the middle and sometimes one at the top, of some metal. He wore a scarf or girdle to which a leathern scrip or wallet was attached. On his return he placed over the altar of his church the branches of the sacred palm tree, which he brought from Jerusalem.

¹⁴ A *corner cross*. There were various forms of emblematic crosses connected with the Christian religion, among which are

St. George's cross	+
St. Anthony's cross	T
St. Andrew's (corner) cross	X

¹⁵ *Prester John* and his domain were probably only fictions of the Middle Ages. He was supposed to be a Christian king and priest ruling over a kingdom in Asia. Later it was believed that his kingdom was in Abyssinia.

¹⁶ The *red cross* was the badge of the First Crusade, worn at the bidding of the Pope, who declared to the multitude at Clermont, "You are soldiers of the cross; wear then, on your breasts or on

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your shoulders, the blood-red sign of Him who died for the salvation of your souls."

¹⁷ *Bills* were the soldiers who used as weapons the bill or billet, a sort of halberd, consisting of a hook and spikes mounted on a six-foot staff.

¹⁸ This account of the war in Hungary between the Christians and the pagan armies is evidently drawn in part from the history of the First Crusade in its beginning under Peter the Hermit. The atrocities here touched upon will be found detailed in histories of the Crusades.

¹⁹ *Adamant* was used in literature to designate metals or minerals of extreme hardness and sometimes of natural magnetic qualities like those possessed by magnetic iron ore.

²⁰ A *kirtle* was a sort of tunic; an upper garment.

²¹ A *mace* was a weapon for dealing heavy blows, and was designed to break the steel armor. It had different forms,—a simple iron club, a spiked club, a pointed hammer. About the time this book was written, the pistol took its place.

²² A *quarry* is a small square or lozenge-shaped block or tile of stone used in building or, more frequently, for paving.

²³ A *wicket* is a small door or gate that forms part of a larger one, and is provided for ordinary use.

²⁴ A *parlor* was originally a small room, set apart from the great hall that was the living room of the château or castle, for private conference or business.

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